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*THINK ON
THESE THINGS.*



BY

BROWNLOW NORTH



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WISDOM : HER CRY.

WISDOM : HER CRY.

B.



WISDOM : HER CRY.

A COMMENTARY ON PROVERBS I. 20—33.

Wisdom crieth without ; she uttereth her voice in the streets :

She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates : in the city she uttereth her words, saying,

How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?

Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;

But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof :

I also will laugh at your calamity ; I will mock when your fear cometh ;

When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind ; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.

Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer ; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me :


For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord :

They would none of my counsel : they despised all my reproof.

Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.

For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.


But whoso hearkeneth unto Me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.



“WISDOM CRIETH WITHOUT.” Such are the words with which the passage opens that I have chosen for this exposition ; and as the Prophet inquired, “ Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah,” and got his answer direct from God,—“*I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save ;*” and as the Psalmist asked, “ Who is this King of glory ?” and at once was inspired to say, “*The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory,*” so will I begin my little book with the inquiry, “ Who is this Wisdom that crieth, and why does she cry without ?” May the same Spirit that taught Isaiah and David the answer to their questions, teach me to reply Scripturally to mine, and may my answer be, as their’s have been, to the benefit of many.

Who is this Wisdom that crieth ? Oh that we all knew, by the power of the

Spirit of God ! It is the Lord from heaven : Christ the Saviour, Christ the sinner's Friend, Christ the Wisdom of God. It is Christ that calleth, and unto you, oh men, He calls ; it is Christ that crieth, and His voice is to the sons of men. Listen to, and believe Wisdom's own history of Herself, as given to us in Prov. viii. ; and all question as to who THAT PERSON is will be set at rest at once and for ever. "Jehovah possessed Me in the beginning of His way, *before* His works of old. I was set up *from everlasting*, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." This PERSON then, "WISDOM," was with JEHOVAH from the time that JEHOVAH was ; from *the beginning—from everlasting*. What words can more plainly declare uncreated Divinity ? "*Set up from EVERLASTING.*" We can understand something of what is meant by no ending—



to everlasting ; but the mind shrinks back altogether bewildered in the endeavour to grasp *no beginning—from everlasting*. Yet this PERSON saith, “I was set up *from everlasting* :” in other words, Ever since God was, I was ; neither was there ever a time when He was, that I was not. “When He prepared the heavens, I was there ; when He set a compass upon the face of the depth ; when He established the clouds above ; when He strengthened the fountains of the deep ; when He gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment ; when He appointed the foundations of the earth : *then I was by Him, as One brought up with Him ; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing ALWAYS before Him ; rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth ; and my delights were with the sons of men.*”

Such is the portrait of the Wisdom that crieth without, drawn for us and given to us, that we may know who it is that calleth ; and surely there can be but ONE of whom it can be a faithful picture. THIS WISDOM is none other than God's beloved Son, in whom, from all eternity, He always has been and always is, well pleased ; He who in the beginning was with God and who was God ; and who, for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, was Incarnate by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary. God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, and "*God was manifest in the flesh.*" A Body was prepared HIM ; and God's Son—He by whom all things were made, and without whom nothing was made that was made—was made *the Son of man*, and came into the world to save sinners.

Had the Word never been made flesh and come into the world, no flesh could have been saved. God would have been in the world it is true, for God is everywhere ; but there would have been no God THE SAVIOUR ; no Wisdom of God to teach sinners : nothing but God out of Christ ; God “ a consuming fire ! ” But by the grace of God the Word *was* made flesh, and *did* come into the world ; and by the grace of God He crieth in the world ; and I know no words more likely to make man listen to His call, than the words with which He Himself, Christ the Wisdom of God, concludes Prov. viii. : the chapter from which I have already so largely quoted. “ *Now therefore,* ” — Now therefore because I love you, and have loved you from eternity ; “ *now therefore,* ” because I have come down from heaven to die for you, that you and I might live together for eternity ; “ *now*

therefore," because I am the Wisdom of God, and know better than you what will really make you happy for eternity, "Hearken unto Me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways. Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that heareth Me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth Me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord. But he that sinneth against Me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate Me love death."

Wisdom then,—the Person spoken of that crieth,—is the Lord Jesus Christ : *Christ the Wisdom of God*. But why is it said that "*Wisdom crieth without*" ? "*Wisdom crieth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets, she crieth in the chief places of concourse, in the opening of the gates, in the city she*

uttereth her words." Why is it thus? why does she cry without? Why does she not rather utter her words in the inmost recesses of the heart of every man, and thus make sure that every individual shall hear? For this reason: that before you can cry in the heart, you must get access to the heart,—and she is not in the heart to cry. Wisdom is not in the heart of man by nature,—only wickedness and folly: wickedness and folly so great that under its teaching man will believe, and thank God that he is neither such a fool as Esau, or such a sinner as Judas, while all the time he is selling his Saviour and his soul for something less than they did,—a mess of pottage, or thirty pieces of silver. Man may have wisdom for this world; he may know how to buy and sell and get gain, but he has no *spiritual wisdom*, not the smallest atom. His exis-

tence is everlasting : before him is an eternal life of living death or living glory ; and if his wisdom cannot teach him to escape the death and secure the glory, can it be called wisdom, though it teaches him to gain the whole world ! If, with an everlasting existence before him, all that his wisdom can get for him will profit him nothing in a hundred years, is his wisdom worthy the name ? Ask thyself this question, oh thou who art wise only for this world, and then ask CHRIST, the WISDOM OF GOD to teach you the answer. Once there was no more true wisdom in the world than there now is in the natural heart ; but by the wisdom of God, the Wisdom of God got into the world, and into some hearts in the world : and now “ *Wisdom crieth without,*”—*outside* the heart in which she is not,—with the desire that folly may be silenced, and wickedness

put to confusion by Her voice, and the heart opened to let her in. In the third verse of the passage we are given the very names of those to whom she cries, and in the following, what she says and promises to do for them, if they will turn and listen.

First, as to who are they that are called. Perhaps your name is amongst them. If so I have a direct message from God to you. Let us see. "Wisdom crieth without ; she uttereth her voice in the streets ; she crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the opening of the gates ; in the city she uttereth her words, saying, *How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?*" Now in this cry we have mentioned by name the very persons to whom Christ calls. To the SIMPLE ONES, the SCORNER, the FOOL. Observe, it is not a call to those

who were *once* simple, *once* scornful, *once* foolish, but are *now* turned and penitent ; but to those who are still going on in their wickedness, listening to no voice but the voice of their own hearts, and leaving as they rush down the broad road to destruction, the Wisdom of God behind them. It is not to the already turned one, struggling with sin, that Wisdom crieth ; but to the simple in the midst of his simplicity, to the scorner in the height of his scorning, to the fool who is still going on in his folly, and to every one who answers to one or all of these names, I have *a direct message from God*. Is your name in the list ? Let us look at it carefully. Does the title "*simple*" apply to you ? Humbling as it is, do you know in your heart of hearts that you have been a simple one all your life, and are but a simple one still ? If so I have a message

from God to you. But you say, No : that is not my name. Whatever else people may say of me, they cannot say I am amongst the simple. I have no reason to blame myself for anything in the past. I began life with small beginnings, and am doing very well ; or, I was born in a good position, and I have raised myself to a better, and if things go on as I have a right to expect, I shall soon have little left to wish for. If the message is only to the simple, there is no message to me ; for let who else may answer to the name, I am not amongst the simple ones."

Not amongst the simple ones ! You have raised yourself to a better position than you were once in, and if things go on as you expect, you will soon have little left to wish for. Is this what you say ? And is this your reason for thinking you are not a simple one ?

If things go on as you expect ! I suppose you expect to die? You expect death, judgment, and in another world an existence that will be everlasting. You believe that the years that remain to you in this life, are only a few out of a life that will last as long as the life of God. And your only reason for not classing yourself amongst the simple is, that you have made provision for *the life that now is!* If in an hour from this you were on your deathbed, and God should say to you, as He has so often said to many like you, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee," would you not then think you had been a simple one? Would you not then be forced to confess that you had spent your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not; and if it could be purchased with all the earthly substance that you have gained by your earthly

—


wisdom, do you not know that you would give it all for a little time to make peace with God? Oh, think again before you say your name is not mentioned by Wisdom in her call! If you are only preparing for the time you have to pass in the world, and are not preparing for the eternity which is before you after you have left the world, your name is "simple one." If you say, "No, I cannot see it," that does not alter the fact: you are a simple one still,—a very, very simple one. A simple one of the worst and most hopeless kind: a blind simpleton; one who walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth. But if you see it,—if you acknowledge that in following your own wisdom, which is foolishness with God, to the neglect of the only true wisdom, the wisdom of God, you have been simple, do not despair,—your name is mentioned by WISDOM in

her call. *I have a message from God for you.*

And scorers. Oh the longsuffering, mercy, and goodness of God ! Wisdom crieth not only to the simple, but *to scorers*. Not only to those who in their ignorance and stupidity are turning their backs upon God's wisdom, but to those who are making a mock of sin, scoffing at the religion of Jesus Christ, walking after their own hearts' lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming ? (2 Peter iii. 3, 4.) *Oh ye scorers*, cries Christ the Wisdom of God to you, *how long will ye delight in your scorning ?* What good has it ever done you ; what good do you expect it ever will do you ? You laugh at religion, you ridicule the Bible ; and if the Bible is not true, your scorn and scoffing will never do you any harm, for its revelations are idle dreams, and damnation a myth.

But this is *your highest hope*,—you have none greater : that the Bible is not true—that what it says will never be : that after death there is no judgment, no hell, no future. But what if your hope deceives you, and the Bible is true ? According to your own faith, as I once said to an avowed scoffer,—and because I think the thought likely to do good even to more than the avowed scoffer, I have both in preaching and writing repeated it often,—according to your own faith, you have no hope of escaping everlasting damnation, except that the Bible is a lie. If the Bible is true, your damnation is a certainty : there is nothing before you but everlasting burnings. Surely then the Christian is in a better position than you. He not only thinks that the Bible will do him no harm, but that it will do him positive good. If the Bible is not true he is no worse off than

you are ; but if it is true, how much worse off are you ! If the Bible is not true, then there is no known future ; and he that believeth and an infidel are both alike, and both like the beasts that perish. But if the Bible is true, how beyond telling are they unlike ! How infinite is the blessing that is coming on the believer : how infinite the curse that is coming on the scorner ! It has never entered into the heart of man to conceive the meaning of the words "*for ever with the Lord :*" THAT is the blessing that is coming on the believer. It has never entered into the heart of man to conceive the meaning of the words, "*the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched :*" THAT is the curse that is coming on the scorner. Would you not then rather be in a position to say, *if the Bible is true, I am saved*, than remain in a position in which



you are compelled to say, *if the Bible is true, I am damned.* And why should you not be in this position? There is no hindrance but your own will. HE whose eye has been on you all your life, and who at any moment could not only have killed your body, but after He had killed had power to cast you soul and body into hell, has spared you till this moment,—spared you that you may read what you are reading, and have opportunity to take your place amongst the saved. Notwithstanding your past scorning, and the special judgments denounced against scorers in His Word, WISDOM expressly mentions *scorner* in Her call. Is your name *scorner*? If so, *I have a message from God to you.*

But my message extends further.—“Oh, ye simple ones, how long will ye love simplicity, and scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?”

FOOLS : a call to fools ! I dare not call any man a fool, for "*it is written*," He that calleth his brother a fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." Still, I must try and bring home the name to those whose name it is, for it would be sad indeed if there was a message from God to any man, and the man did not know it, because he did not know his own name. Let us see who they are that God calls fools.

God calls *every unconverted man* A FOOL. The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God ; and he who knows no other wisdom, knows nothing of true wisdom, and is in God's sight as void of understanding as the veriest fool on earth. The fool, or the worldly-wise man (for they are synonymous), does not think so, for it is written, "Folly is joy to him who is destitute of wisdom." But this joy is the joy of a fool, and his

foolishness prevents his knowing his folly. Thus saith the Lord : "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy is understanding,*"—and no earthly wisdom ever yet taught a man the fear of the Lord, or to know God, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the Holy One of Israel. Every child of Adam is by nature *a born fool*. Accept the name, and *I have a message from God to you*.

But let us go into the title "*fool*" a little more specifically, for though our hearts will never teach us, God has given us some very plain descriptions by which the fool may know himself, if the fool will only believe God. For instance, in the fourteenth Psalm, it is written, "*The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.*" Do you say in your heart, There is no God? "Certainly not," you say at once : but think a little

before you answer. Many are infidels at heart, who have not only never professed infidelity, but have never suspected that they were infidels. Oh, how often have I spoken and written on this subject,—so often that I half shrink from mentioning it again ! But, as I said in the first book I ever published, that I know no instruction more likely to be useful, so I still say ; and as my subject naturally introduces it, even at the risk of being accused of tautology, I will speak about it here.

It is not more true that every man by nature is born a fool, than that by nature he is born an infidel,—an unbeliever in *the very existence* of the God of the Bible. Man by nature is born WITHOUT GOD. God by nature is not in him, and of necessity it follows he is born without the knowledge of God. Neither has he any reason, or wisdom, or

spirit in him, that can teach him to know God, or will ever make him feel that he is without Him, and in want of Him. There is a spirit in him,—a spirit that is his leader and teacher ; but this teacher, so far from teaching him that he is without God, will never let him know, if he can help it, that there is a God to be without. If while under the teaching of this teacher he hears of God, he will teach him to believe that he believes in Him when he does not. But when GOD THE TEACHER takes the place of this teacher, man finds out that he is an infidel,—an unbeliever. What I mean by an infidel, an unbeliever, is this : a person who has not as much faith as enables him to believe that God is a reality,—an ever-present PERSON ; a Person who can see, and hear, and act : a Person, in short, who, though invisible, is. The *first thing* God would have

His people learn, is to know Him by His name, I AM ; and he who does not believe that God IS, may profess what he pleases, but it is impossible for him to please Him. He is *without faith*—an INFIDEL,—a *fool who says in his heart, There is no God* ; and if he dies in that state, he will have his portion with the unbelievers. (Heb. xi. 6.)

Now do you believe that GOD IS ? For forty years I believed that I did, because for forty years I lived without putting it to the proof ; but when in deep anxiety about my soul, and with an earnest desire to have a real dealing with Him, I went into my chamber, shut the door, prostrated myself before Him, and implored His pardon and His Holy Spirit, I learned that I did not. I learned I had not as much faith as enabled me to believe in Him as an actuality ; a really present, though *invisibly present* Person. I

could believe that I WAS, and that I was in the room; I had no doubt about it—I KNEW IT: but there was nothing either in or out of me that enabled me to know “HE IS.” At that time I knew nothing of BELIEVING, or receiving anything on the bare testimony of God’s Word, simply because *He said it*. I could *see myself* in the room, by sight and sense and feeling, but I had *no faith*, and so could not see the INVISIBLE ONE, or credit Him who made my eyes and ears, with being able to see and hear me.

Now have you ever gone to your room to have a real transaction with God, and been enabled when you spoke to Him to believe in Him as a great present Reality, hearing you and seeing you? If so, happy are you: you are not far from the kingdom of heaven. But unless He whom you call God is more to you than the gods of whom

it is written, "eyes have they, but they see not ; they have ears, but they hear not ;" unless you have as much faith as enables you to believe that the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ sees you when you go to Him, and hears you when you speak to Him, you may say you believe, and believe what you say ; but GOD says, "Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he that cometh to God must believe that HE IS," and do you believe that HE IS ? You do not ; and are therefore still amongst those amongst whom you were born ; amongst the blind unbelievers ; amongst the fools who say in their hearts that there is no God. If this is your case do not despair. Your name is "FOOL," and I have a message from God to you.

Again, God says, "*He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool.*" (Prov. xxviii. 26.) Now

though there are many different names by which they are known amongst men, there are on earth only two teachers,—the heart and the Lord Jesus Christ ; and by one or other of these is every man taught and guided. The proof of whom we believe is whom we follow, and he who believes in his own heart and follows it, is a fool, and on the road to hell ; but he who believeth in the Lord Jesus Christ and follows Him, is a wise man, and on the road to heaven. He that trusteth in his own heart does not believe this ; for, says the Word of God, “*the way of a fool is right in his own eyes ;*” and again, “*there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end of that way is death :*” but believe it or not, it is as certain as the Word of God can make it, that no man from his birth to his grave ever yet followed the counsels of his own heart, and did that which

was honestly and truly right in his own eyes, who did not live the life of a fool, and die the death of the wicked. Ever since the fall of Adam, the object of the spirit in man's heart has been to destroy him ; to teach him to call evil good, and good evil ; darkness light, and light darkness ; to lie to him in this life that he may destroy him everlastingly. How thoroughly is this borne out by the descriptions of the heart in the Bible ; all true pictures written for our learning and drawn for us by God Himself. Before the flood, " God saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that *every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*" (Gen. vi. 5.) Yet the flood made it no better ; for thus said the same God after the flood, "*The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.*" (Gen. viii. 21.) More than two thousand years

after, Solomon speaking by the same spirit of God, says, "*The heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live ;*" and Jeremiah, five hundred years after that, "*The heart is deceitful ABOVE ALL THINGS, and desperately wicked.*" Nor in the days of our Lord had it altered for the better. "For from within, and out of the heart of men," says the Lord Jesus, "proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness ; all these evil things come *from within.*" Neither let any man think that these descriptions are only applicable to *some* hearts, for we are expressly told there is *no difference* ; that "as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." The truth is humbling ; but it is truth for all that,—that in *every heart* there

true? Oh, thank God that this is not the day of judgment, but still your day of salvation! You have destroyed yourself; you have been trusting in your own heart, and God says you are a fool. I have a message for FOOLS,—*a message from God to you.*

Again: you remember the history of the Rich man, who had much goods laid up for many years, and who said to his soul, "Take thine ease: eat, drink, and be merry." You remember, too, what God said to him, and the question He asked him: "THOU FOOL, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be that thou hast provided?" But do you remember the commentary made by the Lord Jesus on the conduct of this man? Do you remember how He adds to the parable the instruction He wishes us to get from it? "*So is HE that layeth up treasure for himself, and is*

not RICH toward God." SO IS HE A FOOL.—
Not only he who remains amongst the lost,
and who after Jesus Christ has come into the
world to save sinners, neglects so great sal-
vation ; not only is he a fool, but also he,
who calling himself a Christian, allows his
temporal matters to impede and hinder his
spiritual, and his labours for the things of
earth to interfere with his laying up trea-
sure in heaven. That man, says our Lord,
• is a FOOL.

And so he is. Assume that he is a Chris-
tian—on the Rock—a saved man,—which,
if there is no visible work of faith, and labour
of love, is more than doubtful,—but assume
that he is a Christian : does he not know
that out of an existence which is everlasting,
all the time he has to glorify God on
the earth, and improve the talents He has
: committed to his charge, is from the day of

his conversion to the day of his death? Before conversion, he cannot go to God at all. But Christ has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers, and through Him all Christians have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Through Him, not only is the believer saved, but has opportunity to improve the talents intrusted to him, to lay up treasure in heaven, and be rich towards God. Is he not a fool then, who neglects his short opportunity? I will not say who wraps his talent in a napkin,—for he who does that has no inheritance in the kingdom of heaven; his portion is "*outer darkness*" (Matt. xxv. 30): but is not he a fool, who, overcharged with things temporal, so neglects things spiritual, that while the talents of his more diligent neighbour are bearing spiritual fruit a hundred-fold, it is scarcely possible for any but the merciful God Himself to discover

that his are producing increase at all? Surely, to say the least of it, such a man suffers loss; and if there could be regret amongst the redeemed in glory, I believe it would be regret over opportunities lost on the earth, of glorifying God and laying up treasure in heaven. I do not now ask you if you are saved,—but if you are RICH towards God? If you are not, the Lord Jesus Christ says you are A FOOL. *I have a message from God to you.*

There are many others in Scripture to whom God gives the name of “fool,” but there is little need, neither does my space allow me, to particularize further. Suffice it to say that the call of WISDOM—the message I have to deliver—is addressed to all who will accept the name. I must, however, mention one poor sinner whom God has called a fool, lest while he knows there is mercy

for fools, he should think the title too good for him, and believe himself excluded from the message. I mean the poor *backslider*? Ah, does the name make you start and tremble? If you are a backslider, no wonder that it does, for you are one of the greatest fools on earth, and one of the chiefest sinners. But still you *are a fool*, and you *are a sinner*, and therefore one of the very people whom Wisdom calls, and whom Christ died to save. Dare not, in despair or recklessness, to say, like them of old, "*There is no hope. I have loved strangers, and after them will I go.*" (Jer. ii. 25.) There is hope. It is true "*thou hast spoken and done evil things as thou couldst;*" it is true it would have been better for you not to have known the way of righteousness, than after you did know it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto you; it is true that it has

happened unto you according to *the true proverb*, "The dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire;" but it is also true that God hateth *putting away*, and still saith, in spite of all that is passed, "I AM MARRIED UNTO YOU." *He* saith, I am married to the backslider, and He hateth putting away! Did you ever observe the name by which God calls you in "*the true Proverb*" (Prov. xxvi. 11), from which Peter quotes?—"As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a FOOL returneth to his folly." In God's sight you have been guilty of the loathsome thing spoken of, but it has pleased Him in His mercy to call you "FOOL." Oh, reject not the counsel of God against yourself, but "take with you words and turn to the Lord," for *I have a message from God to you.* (Read Jer. iii.)

But there seems to be one—a man who says his name is not *fool*—for whom there appears to be little or no hope, and for whom, certainly in his present state, I have no message. The proverb I have just quoted —“*As the dog returns to his vomit, so the fool returns to his folly*”—opens the door of hope to the poor backslider ; but do you know the scripture that immediately follows it ? “*Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit ? there is more hope of A FOOL than of him.*”

Oh, ye self-satisfied and self-righteous ones,—ye who are highly esteemed amongst men, and highly esteem yourselves,—ye who say, I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing, and thank God ye are not like other men, especially like the poor backslider, who awhile ago you heard preaching Christ in the streets, and saw


last night lying drunken in the gutter,—know, know of a surety, know from the Word of God, that bad as is his state there is more hope of that drunken backslider than you ! He is a fool, and he knows it, and he may arise and smite upon his breast, crying, “God me merciful to me a sinner ;” and if he does, God will be merciful to him. But you are a fool and *do not know it* ; you are “*wise in your own conceit* ;” you trust in yourself that you are righteous, and despise others. While you remain thus there is NO HOPE for you. The two texts I have quoted thus put together, evidently are put together for our learning, and while Peter refers to the one for the instruction of the backslider, Paul refers to the other for the instruction of the self-satisfied. “If any man,” says Paul, 1 Cor. iii. 18, evidently with reference to Prov. xxvi. 12, “*If any*

man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a FOOL that he may be wise." Oh, brother, is yours the spirit of the Pharisee? Are you a man wise in your own conceit? If so, then know that in giving you this counsel, God does *all He can* for you. He can counsel you, and He does; but unless you obey His counsel, He can do no more for you. He cannot save you,—there is no hope for you: but obey it, and He can; and go to Him, and He will. Cease from your own wisdom, and there is hope for you; come out from the wise of this world and take your place amongst the FOOLS, and *I have a message from God to you.*

And now let us look at the message,—the call of CHRIST THE WISDOM OF GOD, to the simple, to the scornful, to the foolish: "Oh, ye simple ones, how long will ye love

simplicity, and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? *Turn you at my reproof. Behold I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.*"

Now all things that pertain unto life and salvation are contained and promised in this call, to him who listens to it. Call these words of Christ by what name you will,—He calls them (oh, the gentleness of Christ!) His *reproof*;—but, call them by what name you will, the sinner who believes, receives, and acts upon them, is as certain of pardon and everlasting life, as they are who are washed, justified, and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God. Let us look first at the first word, "TURN." The word "TURN" in the Old Testament has much the same meaning as the word "REPENT" in the New. Repentance being *a change of*




mind towards God, which leads a man to *turn* or change his conduct. The two can never be separated. There is no true repentance, or *change of mind towards the Lord God*, where there is no turning ; there is no true turning, or *change of conduct towards God*, where there is no repentance. Christ the Wisdom of God is represented in these Scriptures as crying in the streets, in the chief places of concourse ; while, paying no more attention to Him than men do in our own day, the simple, the scorners, the foolish, are seen hurrying past Him. As they rush down the broad road, leaving Him behind them, He cries to them to TURN. The multitude heed Him not ; but a remnant do ;—some few hear and TURN. Let us assume that you are one of the number. The moment you turn, the Lord Jesus Christ is before you. Until then your face


was to the world, and your back to God ; but now you are a converted or *turned-round* man. Your face is towards God, and if you go forward you go towards Him. But still though your face is towards Him, you may not see Christ, for your three great adversaries, the world, the flesh, and the devil, are disturbed by your turning, and are now in full opposition, doing all they can to distract your attention.

Therefore the *very first teaching* of Christ to him who turns, is to teach him where and on what to look. "Look unto ME," He says : Behold ME. Never mind yourself ; never mind just now what you have been, or what you are ; but looking away from everything else, keep your eyes by faith on ME. I am the Alpha, I am the beginning ; and as a little child begins its education with the first letter of the alpha-

bet, so you must begin with ME. Until you know ME, it is but labour lost to study yourself, or any other person or thing. Study ME: study ME as revealed to you in MY Word, Who I am and what I have done, and what I am able and willing and have promised to do for all who turn to ME. Do not let your mind be turned away from ME by anything you find or do not find in yourself. I know much better than you do that your carnal mind is enmity against God: that you have no spirit in you that will induce you either to love *Me* or obey Me; but look not at that, but at this,—that I who am for you am stronger than they that are against you; and that in ME you have both righteousness and strength; that My strength is made perfect in your weakness, and that you can do all things through Christ strengthening you. Simple,



scoffer, fool that you have been, look at ME, and do not add to all your other sins the sin of unbelief. Abraham, the father of the faithful, did not consider his own body, but believed that what God had promised He was able also to perform, and *therefore* it was imputed to him for righteousness,—and it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but for *yours also*, to whom it shall be imputed if you believe in ME. Look again at MY message, and see what I tell you to BEHOLD. “BEHOLD *I will pour out MY Spirit unto you, I will make known MY words unto you.*” Is not MY SPIRIT—the Spirit of WISDOM—the very SPIRIT you need? When HE is come, He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said to you in my Word. He will take of the things that are Mine, and show



them unto you. He will make known to you that which is hidden from all who have not MY Spirit,—the one living and true way to holiness and happiness and heaven. HE will fight for you and in you, against all OUR enemies, and finally make you more than conqueror through ME, who loved you and gave MYSELF for you. Therefore, oh, all ye who are willing to turn, keep your eyes in all your conflicts on ME and on my written Word ; for, behold, I will not alter the word that is gone out of my mouth, but let any other spirit tell you what it may, only believe in ME, and “ *I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.* ” Believe thou in MY wisdom, and cease from thine own ; trust henceforth in MY counsels, and not in thine own ; and from this moment, and for ever, all things shall work together for your good. “ No

weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper ; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their Righteousness is of ME, saith the Lord." (Is. liv. 17.)

And now I have delivered, according to the ability given me, the message of my Lord to *the simple*, to *the scornful*, to *the foolish*,—in other words, to those who are turning their backs on Christ and His call, and hurrying down the broad road whose end is wretchedness and ruin. If you are conscious that the call is a call to you, how are you going to treat it? You must answer the question to God, for it is God who asks it. The book you are reading, through which He puts it, is but His instrument, His mouthpiece. In every call to sinners, in every effort to arouse, or warn,

or teach, or do them good, if the effort is according to knowledge, it is always God who is the **REAL SPEAKER AND ACTOR**. Godly ministers or preachers or friends or books or letters are but His agents and ambassadors. "Now then," says Paul, in one of the little books he wrote, which we call his second epistle to the Corinthians, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you **IN CHRIST'S STEAD**, be ye reconciled to God." Paul was the instrument, Paul was the ambassador.—But oh, the condescension of God! oh, the meekness and gentleness of Christ! —It was not Paul, but **GOD HIMSELF** who really besought the Corinthians; it was not Paul, but Christ, as really as if He was visibly present, who prayed them to be reconciled to God. And what Paul's letter was to them then, the book you are reading is to you at this

minute ; and I am to you what Paul was to the Corinthians,—*an ambassador for Christ*. The cry of “Christ the Wisdom of God,” is not merely a portion of God’s Word written and commented upon in a little book, and intended for everybody ; but the book which has, by the grace of God, found its way into your hand, and is the cry of Christ the Wisdom of God to YOU. It is not the book, but God Himself who now PRAYS YOU to be reconciled ; it is not the book, but Christ Himself, as if there was no other man in the world but YOU, who now calls on YOU to turn at His reproof, saying, “BEHOLD *I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.*” Consider, therefore, I entreat you, before you reject *the prayers of the Saviour and the beseechings of God*. What it cost the Lord, before He had a pardon to offer, is more than we can

understand,—more than we ever shall understand, unless, which God forbid, amongst the lost in hell we understand in its full meaning what it is to be forsaken of God ; but whatever that means, Christ was forsaken of God that a Way might be made for God to come to YOU ; and He has come to you by that WAY, and is now close to you, beseeching you to be reconciled,—beseeching you to listen to the call of Christ, and TURN. Whether you listen or not is now optional ; but if you reject it now, there is a day coming when it will not be optional. Sooner or later you MUST go to God, and *Christ beseeches you to go NOW*. If you go to Him now, He will forgive you, will pour out His Spirit unto you, will make known His words unto you ; but if you refuse and rebel ; if you never go to Him until He calls you with a call you MUST obey,—namely, by the

voice of the archangel and the trump of God,—then in the remainder of Wisdom's message which I have yet to deliver, you are forewarned of your reception. It is very solemn, very awful ; but revealed as much in love to your soul, by Christ the Wisdom of God, as the portion we have already considered ; revealed that having hardened your heart against all else, peradventure the fear of the Lord may send you through Him to God, and so be to you the beginning of WISDOM. It is true that if you are to be saved there must be something more Christ-like in you than mere fear ; for Christianity worketh by love, and a religion of fear is not Christ's religion ; but for all that, fear has often been made an instrument in the hands of God's Spirit of sending a man to Christ ; and no matter WHAT sends a man to Christ,

—be it the fear of death, or any other fear, —if it really sends him to Christ : Christ has said, “ *Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out.*” As the Bible stands, this truth stands,—that if the chiefest of sinners and hardest of hearts only goes to Christ, the promise of salvation is as certain to him as to the greatest saint on earth.

Now listen to what Christ says to those who will not turn at His call.

“ *Because I have called, and ye refused ; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded ; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof : I also will laugh at your calamity ; I will mock when your fear cometh ; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind ; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then SHALL*

they call upon Me, but I will not answer ; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me : for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord : they would none of my counsel : they despised all my reproof. THEREFORE shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto Me shall dwell safely, and be quiet from fear of evil."

Such are the solemn words with which Wisdom ends her call ; and I will only notice three things that they prominently reveal. First, what will be the conduct of the sinner who has neglected the call, when the distress and anguish and destruction here spoken of cometh upon him ? Next, what will be the conduct of HIM who now calls

to that sinner with an offer to supply all his need ? and, lastly, what is God's explanation of His own conduct ?

First, what will be the conduct of the sinner ? *He will begin to pray.* God says, " THEN *they SHALL call upon Me,*"—" *They SHALL seek Me.*" I have said, a little ago, that sooner or later every man must go to God ; I will now add, that sooner or later every man *must pray.* The man who never prays on earth, will begin to pray as soon as he gets to hell. The first thing the rich man did when he got to hell was to begin to pray. He had never prayed on earth, because he had not felt want ; he had nothing to pray for ; and there can be no prayer without a sense of want. But he was in want in hell, in want of a drop of water to cool his tongue, and he began to pray. It is God's determinate counsel and purpose, confirmed with an

oath, that every man *shall* pray. “*I have sworn by myself,*” He saith, “*the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto ME every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear ;*” and again, as quoted by Paul, “*As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to ME, and every tongue shall confess to GOD.*” WHEN we will pray is optional ; we may do it now, or wait until the day of our destruction. We may bow the knee to God now, and confess our sins, and pray to Him now if we will ; and if we do, it is not too late for *any man* ; or we may put it off till it is too late ; but pray WE MUST, for God has sworn WE SHALL. In hell they do nothing but pray. Here on earth, prayer and praise, for the most part, go hand in hand. At one time, it is witnessed in heaven of the Christian, “Behold he prayeth ;” at another, he

“offereth praise,” he “glorifieth ME ;” but in the world to come prayer and praise are separated. In hell they are in great want, therefore they do nothing but pray ; in heaven they have no want, therefore they do nothing but praise. Oh, ye whose hearts are enmity against God, and to whom the very thought of prayer is hateful, remember you must either pray now,—and if you do it will end in praise ; or you must pray a ceaseless, hopeless, too late prayer,—a prayer that will begin with the day of your destruction, and never come to an end until God Himself comes to an end, and the redeemed cease to praise in heaven !


It is clear, then, that either here or in the world to come, the time will arrive when you *must* pray. If, therefore, your FIRST PRAYER is never put up until it is wrung from you by the felt distress, anguish, and

desolation of a lost soul, how deeply important is it that you should know how He who now calls on you to turn to Him, and pray to Him, and believe in Him, with a promise that if you will, He will supply all your need, will receive and answer your FIRST PRAYER ! In love to your soul, and that the knowledge of it may send you to the Lord Jesus NOW, God has revealed this. His own words are,—and He is not a man that He should lie,—“ *I will laugh at your calamity ; I will mock when your fear cometh ; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind ; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer ; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me.*” This is God’s own description of His answer to the prayers of those who refuse to turn at His call NOW,

and put off praying and seeking till the day of their desolation. Nor does it stand alone, for many are the like descriptions in His Word of what God will be and do to those who are out of Christ in **THAT DAY**. They are very awful ! We have one much the same in the second Psalm.—“ *He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh : the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure.*” Again I say these revelations are very awful ! Doubly so, because men pay so little attention to them. They are great practical Bible statements of judgments that are coming on multitudes, about which multitudes think nothing. “ *Oh, consider this,*” saith the Lord, “ *ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.*” But God calls and warns in vain, and men do not consider.


How touching are the Lord's own grievings over this ! How unwilling is He that any should perish ! “ *The ox knoweth its owner, and the ass its master's crib ; but Israel doth not know ; my people do not consider.* ” And again He saith,—and it is all said in love,—“ *The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.* ” And, again, “ *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.* ” Yet, notwithstanding the revealed hell, the nations do forget God ; and fearful thing though it be to fall into His hands, there is little or no fear of God before men's eyes now. Yet when the day comes, when they find Him to be, what out of Christ He has represented Himself to be, “ *a consuming fire,* ” they WILL fear Him : and that day is coming. THEN they will call upon Him, but He will not answer ; THEN they will seek

Him, but they will not find Him ; but He will treat them THEN exactly as they treat Him NOW. You cannot have a better criterion on which to form your judgment of what will be the treatment of God to you in *that* day, than an examination of what is your treatment of Him in this. Now Christ prays YOU, now God beseeches YOU to be reconciled. What answer do YOU make to the prayers of Christ, and the beseechings of God ? The answer YOU make to these prayers now, is the answer He will make to your prayers then. If you turn to Him, and listen to His words, and try and do what He wishes you, He will turn to you, and listen to you, and do what you wish Him in that day of trial ; but if you laugh at His Word, make a mock of sin, or, what is the same thing, refuse to attend to Him when He calleth you, or be found of Him




when He seeketh you, then He will do just the same to you. He will laugh at your calamity ; mock when your fear cometh ; refuse to answer when you call upon Him, or be found of you when you seek Him. Can you blame Him ? Can you even wonder at Him ? Are not you yourself, if I may so speak, educating Him for it, and, instead of following the example that He has set you, setting Him an example that He should walk in your steps ? God is now calling to you. Why do you not call upon Him ? May His Holy Spirit press home on your heart with power, that the answer He now gets from you, is the answer you will get from Him when you call upon Him in the day of your calamity.

But not only has God written for our learning how He will act in *that day* to the impenitent and unturned, but has condes-



cended also to give us the reasons for His conduct. The passage begins with the explanation,—“BECAUSE.” Because why? Is it because these castaways had been murderers, or adulterers, or fornicators, or extortioners, or thieves, or liars, or covetous, or blasphemers, or drunkards? Is it because they had been guilty of one or all of these sins, or of any other sins that you like to mention, and were too bad to be forgiven, that God says He will despise their cry and reject their prayer? In his epistle to the Corinthian converts, Paul draws a picture of sinners worse, if possible, than I have drawn, and then adds, “*Such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*” These sinners, great and loathsome as they were, could be, and were forgiven, for they listened

to God's call by the mouth of Paul, and went to Christ ; and the Blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth from ALL sin : and it will not be because he has broken the commandments of God, though he has broken them as often as he has hairs on his head, that God will turn a deaf ear to a man in the day of judgment. For what then, you ask, will He ? Listen, for it is God who answers your question, and may He give you the hearing ear. "*BECAUSE I have called, and ye refused ; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded ; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof : I ALSO will laugh at your calamity ; I will mock when your fear cometh.*" Do you understand now ? It is God's own explanation of why any man is lost. However great a sinner a man may have been, there is no necessity



for his being lost because he is *a sinner*. Jesus Christ came from heaven into the world to *save sinners*. Jesus Christ having lived and died for them is gone back into heaven, there to appear in the presence of God *for sinners*. Jesus Christ is at God's right hand to give repentance and remission of sins *to sinners*, and is able to save to the uttermost *every sinner* that comes to God by Him. Moreover Jesus Christ is as willing to save as He is able, and has promised to cast out *no sinner* that comes to Him. Therefore *no sinner* is lost, even though he is the chiefest of sinners, simply because *he is a sinner*, for there is a Fountain opened that can cleanse away *any sinner's* sin and uncleanness, and God calls on *every sinner* to arise and wash away his sins, calling on the name of the Lord. But the condemnation of the sinner is that he refuses to obey

the call,—refuses to arise and turn to Him who loves sinners, and washes them from their sins in His own Blood. There is not a man on earth who might not be saved, and he that is lost, will not be lost because his sins were too great to be forgiven, or his heart too hard to be turned, but because he would not attend to the call of Christ, and believing His promise,—“Behold I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you,”—seek from Him the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, and the knowledge of HIS WORDS. “BECAUSE *I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; I ALSO WILL MOCK.*” We have the same teaching in the thirtieth and thirty-first verses. “*They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. THEREFORE shall they eat of the fruit*

of their own ways, and be filled with their own devices."

"*I have stretched out my hand,*" is an expression that should touch us. Christ is stretching out His hands to YOU at this minute ; but before He could do THAT, *He had to stretch them out on the CROSS.* "*They shall eat of the fruit of their own ways,*" also are words full of fearful meaning, for let him forget it as he may, every man is and has been sowing seed all his life, which is growing, and which will continue to grow as long as he lives, on the fruit of which, unless he gets God to blot it out in the Blood of Christ he will have to feed for ever. Oh; the agony of the man who realizes at the day of judgment that his portion for eternity is *the fruit of his own ways !*"

And now, in the two last verses of the

passage, does not God teach what I have been striving to teach through the whole exposition? "*For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto Me shall dwell safely, and be quiet from fear of evil.*" Here God expressly teaches that it is "*the turning away,*" and *nothing else* that slays the simple; that it is "*the prosperity of fools,*"—not prosperity observe; *that* if rightly sought and obtained is God's gift and God's blessing,—but "*the prosperity OF FOOLS:*" an inordinate affection in the heart that leads a man to lay up treasure for himself on earth, rather than seek to be rich towards God; to turn from Christ, and His ways, lest Christ and His ways should interfere with his prosperity; to do that on which he cannot ask God's blessing, in order to increase his prosperity; to say,

“I will be rich,” though in labouring to be rich he has to keep his face to the world, and as a consequence turn away from God,—this is the prosperity of fools; this is the prosperity that destroys; the prosperity to which our Saviour alluded when he asked, “What will it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?” This is the prosperity that is incompatible with listening to Christ, and is only another name for *turning away from Him*.

NOTHING *but turning away from Christ can destroy any man.*

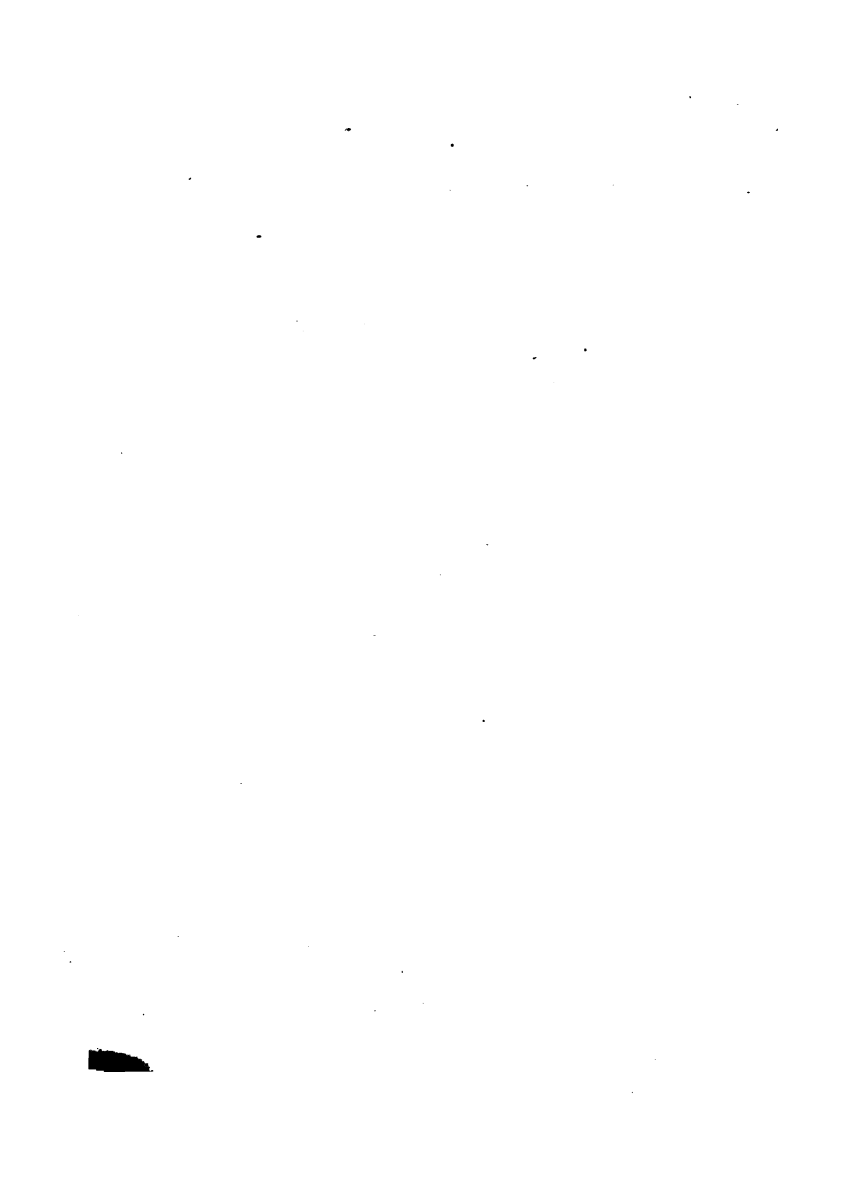
The last verse is the converse of the above, and a very great and precious promise. It has but one condition, “HEARKEN,” and the word “WHOSO” makes it a promise to the whole world. “*But WHOSO hearkeneth unto ME shall dwell safely, and be quiet from fear*

of evil." If YOU are not dwelling safely, and if YOU are not quiet from fear of evil, in some shape or other, you are not hearkening to the word of God.

As Paul said to Timothy, so in conclusion I say to you : "*Consider what I say ; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.*"



WISDOM: WHO HAS IT



WISDOM : WHO HAS IT?

AN EXPOSITION ON 1 COR. I. 18, to II. 14.

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness ; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

Where is the wise ? where is the scribe ? where is the disputer of this world ? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world ?

For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom :

But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness ;

But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men : and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called :

But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise ; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty ;

And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are :

That no flesh should glory in His presence.

But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God



is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption :

That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power :

That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect : yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought :

But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory :

Which none of the princes of this world knew : for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory.

' But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.

But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit : for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him ? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God ; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.


Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth ; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

But the natural man receiveth not the things of

the Spirit of God : for they are foolishness unto him : neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

WISDOM : who has it ? Man ? Yes ; blessed be God, many : but certainly not man BY NATURE. It is not in the natural heart,—not in the heart which man brings with him into the world. In that heart there may be, and I believe generally is, the wisdom of this world ; enough of it, if it gets proper treatment and cultivation, to enable a man to get on in life, and to fulfil with advantage to himself and to the satisfaction of others the relative duties of his position. I believe that a man who has enjoyed average health and strength, has in the vast majority of cases only himself to blame, if in his old age he is not in a position of average comfort and respectability. But after life temporal comes life eternal ; and what will it profit a man

though he has had wisdom to gain the whole world, if he has not had wisdom enough to save his own soul ? Now what I am about to contend for is this : that there is no SPIRITUAL WISDOM in the heart of man by nature ; that let his earthly talents and attainments be what they may, that not one or all of them put together, can either ever teach him, or enable him to teach others, the way of salvation, or give him the least insight into that greatest of all sciences,—*the science of the knowledge of God*. We are told in the Epistle to the Thessalonians (2 Thes. i. 7, 8), and “ *the Scripture cannot be broken* ” (John x. 35), that the Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, “ *taking vengeance on them that know not God.* ” And it is not more certain that this Scripture will be fulfilled, and that all who know not God will be punished with everlasting destruc-



tion ; than it is, that he who passing through life lives and dies without having any other teacher than his own wisdom and reason, or the wisdom and reason of his fellow-men,—lives and dies without the knowledge of God. And this also, though not more certain, is as certain,—that *God has from all eternity ordained that it should be so*. These are the two propositions with which I start, and propose to prove from the Scriptures chosen for this commentary : First, that neither by his own wisdom nor searchings, nor by the wisdom nor searchings of any or all the learned men that ever lived put together,—but only by the direct agency and teaching of the Holy Spirit, can man learn to know God unto salvation : and next, that this should be so has been God's determinate and declared purpose from all eternity. I pray that as we consider the passage that

same Holy Spirit may teach us many other useful lessons ; but I specially pray Him to teach these. I have long known them to be much wanted ; for while the Bible says the natural heart of man is desperately wicked and deceitful above all things,—its thoughts evil, only evil, and that continually,—and that he who trusteth in it is a fool ; there is a growing and soul destroying heresy abroad, especially amongst studious and so-called thinking young men,—that man *does not* in order to salvation, require an absolutely new heart ; that he *does* bring into the world with him a seed of wisdom, which if diligently cultivated and looked after will grow into a tree of knowledge, teaching him to know God, and producing fruit in virtue of which he shall attain to everlasting life. Now he who believes this, or anything like this, believes a lie ; for there is no such seed

in man. There is that in some that may be trained to all that is naturally amiable, and excellent, and lovely ; to much even that, man being the judge, may look like piety and religion, causing the poor deceived ones not only to trust in it, but to propagate the lie that is deceiving themselves. Thus many being deceived, become deceivers also ; examples of which surround us. But natural religion, like the lamps of the foolish virgins, has no oil in it. "THIS IS LIFE ETERNAL, to know God, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent : " and again, "He that HATH THE SON hath life, and he that hath NOT THE SON hath not life ; " and whatever else his heart may have taught him, never yet was there a seed of wisdom in it by nature, that taught man to know God, and Jesus Christ, or to believe in the Son unto life eternal.

The passage we are to consider opens with the solemn statement, "*The preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness.*" By "the preaching of the Cross," every one will at once admit that Paul meant those doctrines which he was in the habit of preaching about Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. Without here dilating on them, let us glance, as briefly as possible, at some of the most prominent. Paul preached—

1. That all men have sinned. (Rom. iii. 23.)

2. That the wages of sin is death; so that death hath passed upon all men, because all have sinned. (Rom. v. 12; and vi. 23.)

3. That God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, and that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. (John iii. 16; and 1 Tim. i. 15.)

4. That had He not come to save sinners, no child of Adam could have been saved. (Acts iv. 12.)

5. That Christ saves all who believe in Him by washing them in His blood, and clothing them in His obedience ; so that they who believe in Jesus are cleansed from all sin, and made righteous in God's sight. (Rom. v. 9 and 19.)

6. That to enable Him thus to save sinners, Christ Himself first fulfilled all righteousness, being from His birth to His death obedient to the law, or in other words, living and dying Himself without committing sin ; then, that He might not only have obedience in which to clothe sinners, but a fountain in which to wash them, He died for them, He shed His blood for them, taking the curse of the law they had broken upon Himself, and bearing their sins in His

own body on the tree. (2 Cor. v. 21 ; Heb. iv. 13 ; 1 Peter ii. 22 ; Rom. v. 6 ; Gal. iii. 10 ; 2 Peter ii. 24.)

7. That He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and is now entered into heaven, there to appear in the presence of God for us, and able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by Him. (Rom. xiv. 9 ; Heb. vii. 25 ; and ix. 24.)

8. That He is as willing to save as He is able, and casteth out none. (Mat. ii. 28 ; John vi. 37.)

9. That there is no other way by which a sinner can get access to God, except through Jesus Christ. (John xiv. 6 ; Eph. ii. 18.)

10. That let a man hold what doctrine he may, if he "abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, he hath not God," but "he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." "If there

come any unto you and bring not this doctrine," saith St. John, " receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed ; for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." (2 Epis. John ix. 10.)

I have not confined myself in this short statement of doctrine, to the writings of Paul, but I have confined myself to the Bible ; to the doctrines of the Cross ; to the doctrines the apostles wrote, and that Paul and the apostles preached ; to the doctrines that Paul says are to certain people *foolishness*.

Foolishness ! yes, absolute genuine foolishness ! It is not that people *pretend* to think them foolishness, but that they really do ! They hear them, they think about them, they reason about them, they read about them ; they put them side by side and compare them with what this learned man and

that learned man has said about them, and in the end consulting their own hearts, and making up their own minds, come to the conclusion that they are doctrines only suited to servant girls and idiots ; doctrines that no thinking mind could receive ; doctrines that are *foolishness*. Now remember I am not speaking here of the hypocrite,—of him who professes to believe in the doctrines of the Cross, while in works he denies them ; but of him who as honestly believes in his heart that the preaching of the Cross is foolishness, as the Israelites believed that they could not get into the promised land when they saw the Canaanites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and that the preaching of Caleb and Joshua was foolishness. The preaching of the Cross, says Paul, IS to some, FOOLISHNESS.

But to whom ? TO THEM THAT PERISH !

There is a class to whom the preaching of the Cross is foolishness, but that class is "THEM THAT PERISH." *The preaching of the Cross is to THEM THAT PERISH*, foolishness. Ah, reader ! is it foolishness to you ? If it is, you are at present amongst those who would perish if you were to die ; amongst those who do not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, and in consequence can in no wise enter therein. (Luke xviii. 17.)

But while the preaching of the Cross, says Paul, is to them that perish foolishness, "*unto us which are saved it is the power of God.*" This is one of the doctrines of the Cross,—that *the Cross is the power of God*. It is the Cross of Christ, or rather Christ Himself crucified on that cross, that gives God HIS POWER to save sinners. Had the Son of God never been manifest in the flesh,

and put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, God never could have had the power to save. His heart towards poor sinners,—His will to save them, would have been what it is now; but HIS POWER would not have been what it is now; His love and His mercy would have been on man's side, but His justice and His truth would have been pledged for his condemnation,—and God could not do anything contrary to His justice and truth. Therefore, that mercy and truth might meet together, and that God might remain a just God, and yet be able to be a Saviour, He spared not His own Son, but freely gave Him up for us all; and not only made His body, but His soul an offering for sin. Christ was not only made man for us, and died the death of a man; but Christ was made sin for us, and died the death of a sinner. (2 Cor. v. 21.) The death of a man is the mere

death of the body ; the death that every man saved and unsaved has to die, except those who shall be found alive at the coming of the Lord Jesus. But the death of the sinner is the death of the soul ; and Christ not only died the death of the body for us, but He was forsaken of God for us, which is the death of the soul. This is the death, as I have so often shown in previous writings, that Adam died when he sinned. *God left him.* This is the death that we all die in him, and in consequence of which though we come into the world with all our natural faculties, just as Adam was left when he died in paradise, we come into the world "*without God ;*" this is the death that Christ died for us when on the cross the cry burst from Him, "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME." Then it was that His soul was made an offering for sin. Then

it was that He received the wages of sin. Then it was that the Lord having laid on Him the iniquity of us all, forsook Him, because of the iniquity that was upon Him. Christ died on the cross for our sins, and thus the demands of God's justice being satisfied, and the sins of poor sinners atoned for, the Cross of Christ became "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

"I am not ashamed," says Paul, "of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," and almost the last act of our Lord before He ascended, was to command His disciples "to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, with a plain statement of the consequences to follow." "He that believeth and is baptized," He said, "shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." The preaching of the gos-

pel is the preaching of the Cross of Christ, and while to us who believe it is the power of God to save us, he that believeth not shall be damned, *because God has no power to save him.*

In the verse we have now tried to consider Paul speaks of two classes, and into these two classes the whole world is always divided. God has made no middle or third class, and though the devil has made a very large one, all who are in it are still where they were born,—in the devil's kingdom. One of the only two classes into which God divides mankind is composed of those who reject or neglect the religion of the Cross, and are *those that perish* ; the other is composed of them that believe in it, and are *those that are saved.*

And now Paul having made his statement, "*the preaching of the Cross is to them that*

perish foolishness," proceeds to prove it, as every true Christian always proves every thing,—from the written Word of God. "*For it is written,*" he says, "*I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.*" Paul says, "*it is written*" that God would do this, and therefore I need not stop to show that it is a Scriptural truth ; but it is stated in unmistakable language by Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others of the prophets ; and besides this it is in substance the teaching of all the Word of God,—that it is God's settled and determinate purpose that men who by their own natural wisdom, talents, or reasoning powers, try by searching to find out God, shall not only never get nearer to the knowledge of God, but shall always, and in all ages get further and further from it. Writing to dwellers in the most learned city of the


world, possessing all the knowledge and experience of all the research of all the past ages, and therefore with every earthly advantage on which to base their customs and their creeds, Paul fearlessly called on those who believed the Scriptures to look around them, and say whether it had not been so at Corinth ;—to judge for themselves how much of wisdom worth calling wisdom, the learning of their learned men had taught them. Again and again he calls on his converts to exercise in this matter their own private judgment. “ *Where is the wise ?* ” he asks, “ *where is the scribe ? where is the disputer of this world ? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world ?* The world always has had, and has, and probably always will have mighty minds in it ; mighty thinkers, mighty writers, mighty speakers, mighty doers, mighty men of all sorts, whose

mighty words and works will have a mighty influence perhaps as long as the world endures, and certainly had a mighty influence at Corinth at the time that Paul was writing ; yet he calls on the Christians at Corinth to look and see for themselves what all the mighty minds of all these mighty men put together had taught them. It had taught them to become great upon the earth ; to become mighty and noble, and learned in all the learning of this world ; but what had it taught them of that wisdom which cometh down from above, and maketh wise unto life eternal ? “Professing themselves to be wise they had become fools,” and that same earthly wisdom which in their day and generation had taught them to prosper in things temporal, had so blinded and stultified them in things spiritual, that they had changed the glory of the uncorruptible God


into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things ! While the only living and true God, the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, was to them “ the UNKNOWN GOD,” it was to these images and idols they bowed down and worshipped ; it was to these images and idols they said, “ *Thou art my God : in the day of my trouble thou shalt deliver me.*” Oh how truly hath the Scripture said, “ *The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.*” (Rom. i. 21, 24, and 1 Cor. iii. 19.)

Remember Paul was writing to Christians, —to believers in doctrines he had himself taught them ; and how plainly does his appeal to these people show the estimation in which he held every teaching but the teaching of the preaching of the Cross of Christ. When he went to Corinth, first he

preached to the Jews ; but the Jews opposing and blaspheming, he turned to the Gentiles ; and it pleased God, who is no respecter of persons, to take from amongst them a people for His Name. We have a description of some of these in the sixth chapter of this Epistle, and a lower or more degraded stamp of sinner could not possibly be found. But by the grace of God, they were washed, they were justified, they were sanctified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God ; and it was on these men that Paul called, to exercise spiritual judgment on all the mighty, and the noble, and the learned of their city. In his opinion, the weakest convert to the doctrines of the Cross was a better judge of right and wrong, of good and evil, than all the wisdom of all the wise men in Corinth. And if Paul was here with us in this our day, his opinion (and it is a



sound opinion) would be the same,—that excepting only those who in their hearts believe the doctrines of the Cross, and in plain and unmistakable language confess that Christ and Him crucified is the only power of God unto salvation, the feeblest babe in Christ has more real knowledge, and truth, and wisdom, and understanding in him, than all the knowledge, and truth, and wisdom, and understanding, that is in all the mighty and learned of the land,—laymen and ecclesiastics put together. The man who rejects this doctrine is as much an idolater, a worshipper of a false God, as he who worships an image; and Paul would say of him now, what Isaiah said of a man who in his day cut down a tree, and burned part of it in the fire, with part of it baked bread, with part of it roasted flesh, and of the residue made a god: “*He feedeth on*



ashes : a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his own soul, nor say, IS THERE NOT A LIE IN MY RIGHT HAND ?" (Is. xliv. 14—20.)

Now this state of things was, and always is, the judgment of God upon men for sin ; "because that when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful." (1 Rom. ii. 1.) It was *in the wisdom of God* that the world in Paul's day by wisdom knew not God ; and it is *in the wisdom of God* the same thing in our day. He who believes his heart,—the wisdom of man,—does not know God : he who believes Christ,—the wisdom of God,—knows Him.

But God, for the great love wherewith He hath always loved sinners, even when they were dead in trespasses and sins, has sent help to man,—help which Paul used

very freely ; and we have still the same help for every time of need. It is a remedy that looks to the world very much what the remedy of Elisha looked to Naaman the Syrian ; nevertheless, as the waters of Jordan cured his leprosy, so this remedy hath never failed to cure madness and folly, and to impart sound wisdom to all who have received it. This remedy is what God calls "THE FOOLISHNESS OF PREACHING." "After that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God : *it pleased God*, BY THE FOOLISHNESS OF PREACHING, *to save them that believe.*" The preaching, of course, is the preaching of the Cross ; and the teaching conveyed is quite plain. Man's natural wisdom had, and always has, completely blinded him to spiritual truth. All it teaches him about God is error ; all it incites him to do for God is at the best

“strong delusion : zeal without knowledge ;” and this has been, and is, and always will be, so long as a man’s teacher is his own wisdom, or the wisdom of the wise of this world. But God has introduced another teacher, —THE PREACHER OF THE CROSS ; and it hath pleased and still pleases God, by *the foolishness of preaching* to save them that believe. *“The Jews,”* says Paul, *“require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom : but we preach Christ crucified,—to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness ; but unto them which are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”* There can be no mistake about the meaning of these words. God in His wisdom has introduced a power into the world,—even JESUS CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED ; and Jesus Christ is able to save to the uttermost them that come to God

by Him : but there always have been men who will not accept even salvation itself, unless they can have it in their own way. God's way of salvation was preached to the Jews, and they required a sign,—that something more should be done than had been, to prove to them that it *was* God's salvation ; it was preached to the Greeks, and to their wisdom it appeared opposed to reason and common sense : and because in the counsel of their own hearts the salvation preached was not the sort of salvation they expected, both Jews and Greeks rejected the counsel of God against themselves. The preaching of Christ crucified in that day was, as it is to day, to one class of men a stumbling-block, and to another class of men foolishness. But there was a third class of men who listened to it,—*them which were called* ; those who in a child-like and unquestion-

ing spirit, received it; and to them, no matter whether Jews or Greeks, Jesus Christ and Him crucified became "*the power of God, and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men;*" and it pleased God, and it always has pleased God, and always will, "*by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.*"

Is it not marvellous, looking at this and such like Scriptures, how men of all diversities of creeds and opinions, not excepting many who profess to believe the doctrines of the Cross, unite to underrate and pour contempt upon preaching. How ignorant and ill-instructed in their eyes is he who professes to consider its sermons amongst the greatest privileges of the Lord's day. "I do not go to church for the sermon," says one; "I go to pray:" "I do not


go to church for the sermon," says another ; " I go to praise." Now I trust I go to church both to pray and praise ; but I select the church to which I go from amongst those where I have reason to believe I shall hear preaching calculated, by the blessing of God, to save unsaved sinners and feed my own soul. Preaching is God's appointed instrument for quickening the spiritually dead and for nourishing the living ; and I believe there are few sights more pleasing in the eyes of Him who hath said, "*How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace,*" than a father in Israel, or even a young man, strong in the Lord, standing up, Bible in hand, and scattering amongst the people the unsearchable riches of Christ. We are positively commanded not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together ; and it is our bounden duty to

obey the commandment ; and doubtless, as congregations, we should meet to pray and praise : but for all that, I would never go, and I would urge on other people never to go, to a place professedly set apart for the worship of God, where the preaching of Jesus Christ and Him crucified was not always made a very principal and honoured part of the service. The wisdom of the religionists of the day seems to run contrary to this ; and the services in too many of the churches declare plainly that the doctrines of the Cross of Christ are to their congregations either what they were to the Jews, "*a stumbling-block*," or what they were to the Greeks, "*foolishness*:" but let them beware ; for it was "*by wisdom the world knew not God*;" and "*there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death*." Taking my Bible

for my guide, and comparing what it says, and what I see and hear and read, I hesitate not to say that the open infidelity held and taught in some churches, and the Popish idolatry believed and practised in others, are as much religions of the wisdom of men, and as far a departure from the truth as it is in Jesus, as was the worship of the heathen,—when, left by God to their own wisdom, they changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things.

But, says the wisdom of this world, the doctrines of the Cross are not only foolishness, but it is only weak and simple-minded people who believe them. And, alas, as a rule, the wisdom of this world in this says too truly : whether amongst high or low, rich or poor, the religion of Jesus Christ is

not the religion of the world, but it is peculiarly not the religion of the educated and what are called the upper classes ; and while it is true of all, it is more especially true amongst them,—that he who receives and acts on the doctrines of the Cross, invariably finds himself considered a poor weak creature. The inhabitants of Corinth, both Jews and Greeks, rejected as a body the teaching of Paul ; still there was a remnant according to the election of grace that believed : but who were they ? Were they not the weak things, and the base things, and things that were despised ? In the days of the Saviour it was the same thing, and so is it now. The common people heard Christ gladly ; but, asked the Pharisees, “ Have any of the rulers or Pharisees believed on Him ? ” Paul preached Christ, and though many were called, was there



among them many wise men after the flesh, many mighty, many noble? And, blessed be God, as Paul preached Christ, so is He still preached; but can we with any stretch of charity believe that our aristocracy, our upper classes, our leaders of the opinions of this world in any very great number believe on Him? The Pharisees and the rulers in our Lord's time; the wise men, the mighty, and the noble in Paul's time; the great of this world, the mental powers, the guiders of their fellows in our own time, and in all times ever since they were preached, have ever as a body rejected the doctrines of the Cross. "*Ye see your calling brethren,*" says Paul in the next verses we have to consider, "*how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; for God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the*

wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised hath God chosen, and things which are not to bring to nought things that are." The fact may seem a strange one, and to the great and mighty of the earth as unacceptable as strange, but so it is; and perhaps to the great and mighty of the earth it may seem more strange and more unacceptable still, that HE who is seldom said when on earth to have rejoiced, is said to have rejoiced over this very truth. (Luke x. 21.) "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." Let not however this great Scriptural truth and evidently undeniable fact

stumble you. God is as willing to save the scribe and Pharisee as He is the publican and the harlot ; and will no more cast out the wise and mighty and noble than He will the weak and base and foolish ; but every one I have mentioned,—the scribe and Pharisee, the publican and harlot, the wise and mighty and noble, the weak, the base, the foolish, have all equally destroyed themselves, and are all equally hell-deserving sinners ; *but they do not all equally see it,*—and this makes the *only* difference between them. He who sees it and goes to Jesus, no matter who he is, is saved ; he who does not see it, and does not go to Jesus, no matter who he is, is lost. *And though it is true that God “hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him,”* yet, blessed be His holy name, there

are of the mighty, and the noble, and the learned who *do see it*. Glory be to God for the number of those who have thanked Him for the letter M. It is not said that not *any* mighty, but that not *Many* mighty are called ; and as the late dear Duchess of Gordon, and many others like her have said, the letter M makes all the difference. As in the days of the Apostles, "*a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith, also of honourable women, and of men not a few ;*" so a great company of earth's noblest and mightiest have at different times and places become obedient to the doctrines of the Cross. But every one of these learned under the teaching of the Spirit of God, that all the honours and power and wisdom of the world were shadows, and that instead of being mighty ones, they were poor, weak, needy, self-destroyed and hell-


deserving sinners ; that the things of earth could profit them nothing if they lost their own souls ; and that their souls could only be saved by the grace of God in Christ Jesus. And to this knowledge must every one be brought, or he cannot be saved. But let him be who he may, he who will take his place at the foot of the Cross amongst poor and needy sinners shall never perish, for he has the promise, "*He shall deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also, and him that hath no helper.*" Therefore saith Paul, "*If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.*"

And now why is it all thus ordered ? The Man Christ Jesus accepted it and rejoiced in it, as being the expression of His Father's will, saying, "*Even so Father, for*

so it seemed good in Thy sight ;” but by the mouth of Paul God has given us the explanation : “ THAT NO FLESH SHOULD GLORY IN HIS PRESENCE.” “ Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called ; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise ; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty ; and base things of the world, and things that are despised hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not to bring to nought things that are, THAT NO FLESH SHOULD GLORY IN HIS PRESENCE.”

“ THAT NO FLESH SHOULD GLORY IN HIS PRESENCE.” In this short sentence I believe we have the key to all God’s dealings with His creatures. Let it stumble whom it may, it is written, “ *The Lord hath made all things for Himself, even the wicked for the*

day of evil ;" and His ultimate aim and end in all is *His own glory* ; that nothing that He hath created should ever in itself have anything whereof to boast,—that all His works should praise HIM ; for, for His glory they were and are created. It has been thus with the elect angels, with men, and with the angels who kept not their first estate. Of these latter I need not speak ; they will praise God for ever and ever to the praise of His justice and His power, but they have nothing whereof to glory ; but had the angels who kept their first estate, and who Paul calls "*the elect angels*," not been saved by the electing love of God, they might have fancied it was by their own innate holiness that they fell not, and so thought they had whereof to glory. But now they know, and with the voice of thanksgiving confess that they were only



made to differ by mercy. And when the great company of the redeemed stand before the throne, and before the Lamb, and cry with a loud voice, *Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb*, "ALL THE ANGELS," instead of glorying in the pride of their unfallen innocence, *stand also round about the throne, and fall on their faces, and worship God, saying, Amen. Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.* (Rev. vii. 9—12.) And thus it is with man. Had our first parents, Adam and Eve, not fallen in Paradise, they would have been justified by works, and might have fancied they had whereof to glory ; but with a power in themselves to keep God's commandments,—which neither you nor I by nature have, for when they sinned

they lost it, not only for themselves, but for their heirs for ever,—they fell on the first temptation. From that moment to them and their posterity belonged shame and confusion of face for ever ; from that moment boasting was excluded, and no flesh could ever glory in God's presence. But from that moment He who alone can bring good out of evil, began to manifest *His own glory* ; and in His work of redemption, His plan for saving Adam and his seed, He has manifested it, as He never could have manifested it, had not our first parents sold God for an apple.

Perhaps some, judging by their own wisdom, do not accept these things as being for the glory of God. Let such take care. Our Saviour tells us of a man, the type of many now in hell, who seems during his life-time to have thought more about God than many

do, but to have formed His opinions of Him, not from the Scriptures, but from his own notions ; and when called on in the great day of account, he told God what his own notions had taught him : “ *I knew Thee,*” he said, “ *that Thou wert an austere Man,*” and I acted accordingly. I think it very likely the man believed exactly what he said, and God took no trouble *then* to put him right. At a great cost to Himself he had given him the Bible, but the man had not believed the Bible. Simply saying, “ Thou knewest that I was an austere man, then thou shouldest have done what I commanded,” God ordered him to be bound hand and foot and cast into outer darkness. Now this is exactly what He will do to every one who, no matter what excuse he may make for it, refuses in simple faith to accept the plain revelations of God ; and though I have no doubt that

in outer darkness they call God's judgment unjust, in the judgment of God it is just ; and as the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men, so that all the concentrated wisdom of the lost cannot alter the judgment or lessen its torments, or all their strength break down the walls of their prison or lighten its darkness,—would it not be truer wisdom for those to whom the doctrines of the Bible seem foolishness, to cease from their own wisdom, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ ? Then instead of their being cast by God into outer darkness, they would become His beloved children in whom He was well pleased ; and the Holy Ghost would bear the same testimony to them that Paul has borne to those who believed in Him at Corinth : “ Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and

righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

"*But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.*" This is the next verse we have to consider. "*But of Him:*" that is, *of God*. Observe it is distinctly declared to be *all of God*. "*Of God are ye.*" But who are the "YE." YE who have believed those doctrines of the Cross, which are to them that perish foolishness : "*Of God are ye IN CHRIST JESUS.*" Oh, think a moment, how blessed a thing it is to be "*IN CHRIST JESUS.*" "There is no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus ;" the wrath of God abideth on all others, and they are condemned already ; but he that is in Christ Jesus is not condemned, neither shall he ever come into condemnation, but he is passed from death unto life.

He *hath* the Son, he *hath* life, and *his life is hid with Christ in God*. Oh, it is a blessed thing to be in Christ Jesus! And then, being in Christ Jesus what follows: "Of God He is made unto us WISDOM." Ah here it is,—in the Word of God,—that we learn from whence the saved man gets his wisdom : not from his own brains, but from Jesus Christ ; and while all the wisdom that is in man by nature can only make him wise for this world, and teach him to lose his own soul,—OF GOD, *Christ the Wisdom of God, is made the wisdom of the believer*, and makes him wise unto salvation. And as of God He is made unto him *wisdom*, so of God is He made unto him RIGHTEOUSNESS, and SANCTIFICATION, and REDEMPTION. The wisdom of God teaches him that all these things are not the works of man, but the free gifts of God in Christ Jesus : "*Not of*

works, lest any man should boast." And when he accepts the things that are freely given to him of God, he knows, on the one hand, that he is *complete* in Christ,—able at all times, and at any time, either in this world or the next, to go into the presence of God, and stand "*holy, unblameable, and unreprouvable in His sight ;*" and on the other, that he has nothing he has not received, nothing whereof to glory,—that it is by grace he is saved through faith, and that not of himself: it is the gift of God. These are the doctrines of the Cross, which are to them that perish *foolishness ;* these are the doctrines of the Cross, that *no flesh should glory in God's presence ;* these are the doctrines of the Cross, "*that according as it is written, him that glorieth let him glory in the Lord.*"

Paul having stated these doctrines to the

Corinthian converts, and explained to them they were so ordered that the pride of man might be brought low and God only exalted, goes on to remind them how he himself had shown his faith in his own teaching, by his conduct when amongst them. *"And I, brethren,"* he says, *"when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power : that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God."* Reading such language as this, can any honest mind doubt that Paul in his efforts to save and

benefit the souls of men, looked entirely away from his own powers of mind, and sought to be taught by a wisdom and a power that was not natural, but supernatural ? By excellency of speech, or enticing words of man's wisdom, he might have made apparently more converts ; propagating a religion spurious in doctrine, or spurious in practice, or both, as many learned men preaching their own wisdom are so plentifully doing in the present day ; but Paul's object was not to please men but to save them ; and emptied of self, or to use his own words, "*in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling,*" he preached to the Corinthians Jesus Christ, and Him crucified, and for what it was that He was crucified ; and though his preaching to some was a stumblingblock, and to some foolishness, it had an effect on others that mere excellency

of speech or man's wisdom never has given nor ever can give, even to the preaching of the truth itself : it came "*in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power.*" Preaching God's way of salvation, and having no confidence in the flesh, Paul put his trust only in God for the blessing ; and God, who never disappoints such trust, gave it. The Spirit of God, whose office it is, took of the things that are Christ's, and showed them to his hearers ; and, as he delivered unto them first of all that which he also received,—how that Christ died for our sins,—the Lord opened the hearts of many, as He did the heart of Lydia, to attend to the words that were spoken by Paul. His heart's desire and prayer to God for them, was "*that their faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God,*" and God granted it.

But for all that, Paul spoke *wisdom*, and what by the grace of God, many knew to be wisdom. "*Howbeit*," he says, "*we speak wisdom among them that are perfect.*" We speak wisdom among Christians,—among those of you who being washed, justified, and sanctified, are *perfect* in God's sight. "*Yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought ;*" but the very wisdom that they think foolishness,—"*the wisdom of God in a mystery : the hidden wisdom,*" the wisdom which is incomprehensible to the natural heart of man, but "*which God ordained before the world,*" not only to His own, but "*to our glory.*" But as the great masses of the mighty and the noble and the learned, as a class, now prove by their words and works that to them the preaching of the Cross is foolishness,—for who will assert that the

religion of Paul is exercising a vital power over the lives of the rank and fashion of the day,—so the wisdom that Paul preached was a wisdom “*which none of the princes of this world,*” either in his day or in Christ’s day, “*knew ; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*” It is true there was a remnant according to the election of grace, for at no time, and in no class, has God ever left Himself without a witness ; and we have to thank Him for Nicodemus the ruler, and Joseph of Arimathea the councillor, of whom it is recorded, “*the same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them ;*” but the chief priests, the scribes, the Pharisees, Herod, Pontius Pilate, Annas, Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, with the elders of Israel, and rulers of the people, crucified Christ as

an IMPOSTOR. Christ was *the Wisdom of God*, but *the wisdom of this world* did not know it, and "*the Kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ ;*" and the Lord's Christ and their Saviour prayed for them with His dying breath, "*Father, forgive them,* FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO."

It is an awful thing NOT TO KNOW. It is "*everlasting destruction.*" Yet man is by nature a spiritual fool, and does NOT KNOW ! God has done great things for him,—great things for him here, and made great preparations for him for his hereafter ; but as a rule he knows nothing about them. "*As it is written,*" to go on with the passage before us, "*eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared*

for them that love Him." Surely you will acknowledge this is truth, for it is the Word of God ; and surely also it is plain truth ; there can be no mistake about its meaning. Men have ears and eyes and hearts, but for all that they cannot see, or hear, or understand how intensely to be desired are the things of God, and what bitter and everlasting regret will be the portion of those that lose them. And this is all because they have no *spiritual* discernment. "*Except a man be born again he cannot SEE the kingdom of God ;*" and as it is an awful thing not to KNOW, so it is an awful thing not to SEE, and the consequences of both are the same, —*everlasting destruction*. Yet man by nature can no more see the kingdom of God than a blind man can see the sun. There is great beauty, great desirableness in it.

There is sufficient in it to make a man forsake all that he has, and start for it—so palpably so, that no man ever yet saw it, who did not start for it ; and no man ever yet started for it who did not get an inheritance in it. But no man will start for it till he sees it ; and no words of man's wisdom, or even of God's wisdom if they are "*in word only*," can ever teach a man to see it. What is to be done then ? We answer, as the Lord answered the Ruler of the synagogue, when they told him his daughter was dead : "*Fear not, believe only*." Paul saw it ; the Corinthian converts saw it ; and so shall you if you will accept their TEACHER. Paul tells us, in the very next verse, how it was that they saw and knew the things of God. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God

hath prepared for them that love Him. *But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit : for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.*" Here God reveals the whole secret ; and I would appeal to every honest man who reads the passage, if language means anything, does it not plainly declare, not only that those who to any real purpose know the things of God, are taught by the Spirit of God, but that neither reason, nor intellect, nor the wisdom of this world, but *only the Spirit of God*, can ever teach man to know them.

But Paul, as if to make these doctrines more absolutely and incontrovertibly the teaching of the Word of God, repeats them a second time in the form of a question : "*For what man,*" he asks, "*knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man*

which is in him ? ” Well : what man does ? What man knows what is in your heart, or my heart, except ourselves ? We know, but nobody else knows ; neither can anybody else ever know, unless we choose to tell them. Then they know ; and getting it direct from ourselves, are in no danger of making a mistake : but until they are told by the man himself, “ *What man,* ” asks God, “ *knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man that is in him ?* ” “ *Even so,* ” continues Paul,—even as no man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him,—“ *even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.* ” Is this plain language ? Does it satisfy you that it is the express teaching of the Bible, that as no man can know *the things of a man*, except the man himself, and he to whom he reveals them ; so no man can know *the things of God*,

EXCEPT *the Spirit of God, and he to whom He reveals them ?*

And now, if this be true, the solemn and all important question follows : “ *Who is YOUR teacher ?* ” From whom are you getting *your creed, your religion, your things of God ?* If the Spirit of God is your Teacher, then you will be the very first to bless Him for it, and to give Him all the glory. Happy are you : press forward ! But if God is not, then some other teacher is ; and be he man or devil, he is no more able to take of the things that are God’s, and show them unto you, than I am able to tell you what is your opinion of this book. And if the Spirit of God is not your Teacher, who is ? You may think it is some minister, or some Church, or some old writer, or I know not who or what ; and your teacher may use man and the things that are man’s as

agents : but if God is not your Teacher, there is in reality only one other that can be ; for if God is not his Teacher, there is only one other that is the teacher of any man. *It is written, "If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom THE GOD OF THIS WORLD hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."* The doctrine of this Scripture is quite plain : if God is not a man's teacher, the God of this world is ; and because he whom he teaches is without God, his teacher has power to blind his mind, so that he neither knows what he is doing, nor sees where he is going. Paul speaks of these same two teachers in the next verse we have to consider,—calling one "the spirit of the world," and the other "the Spirit of God ;" and tells us once more,

as he has told us again and again in the passage I am expounding, that it is because one man gets the teaching of the Spirit of God, while another rests contented with the teaching of the spirit of the world, that one man perishes, and another is made wise unto salvation. Having stated that as no man knew the things of a man save the spirit of man that was in him, that even so the things of God knew no man but the Spirit of God, he adds, "Now WE" (that is himself, the Corinthian converts, and all true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ) "*have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.*" It is a verse of great teaching ; the embodiment of much Gospel in a few words. There *are things* freely given to us of God. God has given us His Son to live for us, and die

for us ; and if any man sin, he has an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous ; and He is the propitiation for our sins ; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world : and whosoever will may take Christ and the things of Christ freely. This is all GIFT : but, as we have already been told, the natural eye cannot see these things, the natural heart cannot understand them ; therefore God has not only given us His Son, and with Him all things that pertain unto life and godliness, but that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God, He has given His Spirit to all who believe in Him, and promised Him to all who ask Him. And then he who is taught by the Spirit, not only knows the things that are freely given to him of God, but begins to speak about them. "Which things also,"

says Paul, we not only know, but "*we speak.*" We speak of them as we have opportunity, both in public and private, in the hope that we may do good to those who are still under the teaching of the spirit of this world ; and we speak also one to another : but neither to them that are "without," nor to them that are in Christ, do we speak "*in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*". This is the way, Paul tells us, that he spoke ; and this is the way, in so far as they are taught by the Spirit of God, that all true Christians speak. And such speaking is always a very blessed thing, or a very hurtful thing, to those that hear it : a sweet savour of Christ to them who are saved ; but to them that perish, a savour of death unto death. Those who are taught

by the spirit of the world, can neither understand it nor tolerate it. It is not only foolishness to them, but when by circumstances they have been thrown amongst people who were comparing spiritual things with spiritual, and talking of the things that had been freely given to them of God, they have been known to think the conversation, and to speak of it, not as foolishness merely, but as BLASPHEMY.

"But Wisdom is justified of all her children." For while it is written, *"They that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it; and a book of remembrance was written before Him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name,"* it is also written, and concludes the passage we have been considering : *"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit*

of God ; for they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Poor natural man ! he cannot receive the things of God, for they are spiritually discerned, and the natural man has no Holy Spirit. What is the poor natural man to do ? Let him listen to the words of Him who is not willing that any should perish, and pray to God for Christ's sake, for grace to believe, and to act upon them.

"At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father : for so it seemed good in Thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father : and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father ; neither knoweth any man the Fa-

ther, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him. Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of Me ; for I am meek and lowly in heart : and you shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Thus, then, saith the Lord. God and the things of God are hid from the wise and prudent, but I can teach even them to know the Father, and THAT is life eternal. Come therefore unto Me. Take MY yoke upon you, and laying all your worldly wisdom and prudence at my feet, learn of Me. Learn of Me to be meek and lowly, and consent to be taught of God. Do this, and MY WORD is pledged that you SHALL find rest unto your souls.

" HE THAT HATH EARS TO HEAR, LET HIM HEAR."

THE GRACE OF GOD.



THE GRACE OF GOD.

A COMMENTARY ON TITUS II. 11—14.

*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation
hath appeared to all men,*


*Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and
worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously,
and godly, in this present world ;*

*Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious
appearing of the great God and our Saviour
Jesus Christ ;*

*Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem
us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a
peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

“THE GRACE OF GOD.” Suppose there had

never been any grace of God. Suppose God had left man under the same law as that under which He originally sent him into the world,—“*the law of works* :” the law which saith, Keep my commandments and live ; but in the day thou sinnest, in the day thou breakest any, even the very least of them, thou shalt die. Suppose, I say, God had left man under that law,—what would be at this moment the position of the whole race of Adam ? God hath said, “He who offendeth in one point is guilty of all,” and again, “All have sinned and come short,” and “there is not a just man on the earth who doeth good and sinneth not,” therefore we know from God’s own teaching that there is not a man upon the earth who is not guilty in His sight, and on whom in consequence the sentence of death hath not been passed. Not death temporal, but death



eternal ; not the death of the body only, but the death of the soul ; a living death, a death that may be felt, a death which after the death of the body consigns soul and body to hell, the place prepared for the devil and his angels.

It is therefore only the grace of God that saves any man from this *living*, or as it is called in Scripture, this *second death*. Had there been no grace of God, no child of Adam could have been saved. The command had gone forth, "Increase, and multiply, and replenish the earth," and men and women would have been born into the world as now ; and, as now, after having lived their appointed time have died ; but there could have been no salvation. Death temporal must without exception have been the portal to death eternal ; and I have sometimes thought that if it had been so, and men

knew that there was no possibility of their being saved, whether they might not have thought more about eternity than they do now. The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared, and they know it, and they have a hope that some day or other, in some way or other, it will bring salvation to them ; but in the mean time, and too often until it is too late, they neglect and forget it ; but did they know of a surety that, let their lives be long or short, their end was everlasting destruction ; that let them get what they might of riches, or honours, or pleasures of the world, there was before them “ a certain looking for of judgment and fiery indignation,”—would they not think more of eternity than they do, and would not the recollection of the future render the enjoyment of the present an impossibility ! Being without the grace of

God does not mar for them this present world ; for, under the delusion of the devil, they trust to its being extended to them some day ; but if there was no such thing as the grace of God would they be indifferent ? There is no such thing for devils, and the devils believe and tremble ; if there was no grace of God for man, would man be more insensible than devils ? I say all this, because eternal death is as certain to him who goeth on still in his wickedness as if there had been no salvation for any man ; and God warns us that if while it is called to-day we neglect that salvation, He may swear in His wrath that we shall never enter into His rest ; and, if but for the grace of God, for the sin of breaking the law of God, man must have perished without hope ; of how much sorer punishment think ye shall he be thought worthy, who in


addition to his sins against the law, tramples under foot the grace of God and neglects so great salvation !

Be all this as it may, however, the True Light now shineth, and the grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men. It is true it shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not ; yet for all that it shineth, and woe to the man who lives and dies without seeing it. Multitudes, however, notwithstanding the woe, never see it, for the grace of God is a spiritual thing, and until a man's eyes are opened by the Holy Ghost he cannot see spiritual things. They are "*foolishness*," says God to the natural man, "*neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*" Man says he can see, and thinks he can see, and therefore his sin remaineth : if he would confess his blindness and seek

light, the grace of God would open his eyes and he would see light; but he is born under a delusion, and until he is born again of the Spirit he remains under a delusion, walking in the darkness in which he was born, and unable to see the grace of God: and if he cannot see it then most certainly he has not got it, and if he has not got it, and never gets it, what has he or what can he ever have that is worth having, or even looking at? He is an immortal being,—has a life as everlasting as the life of God; and, assuming that he has got the whole world, what has he but the things of time,—shadows that perish in the using; what has he that can make an atonement for his sins, or that he can give to God as a ransom for the soul he has forfeited? The grace of God gives a Gift to man with which he can do all this; a Gift

for the sake of which God will blot out the sins of him who has it, and save his soul alive. He that hath it, hath life; but he that hath it not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Of how great importance then is it that we should all know about this "*grace of God*," and how it is that it "*bringeth salvation*." JESUS CHRIST, GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH, IS ITS GREAT EMBODIMENT; THE GREAT GIFT OF THE GRACE OF GOD. It is by Jesus Christ that grace came; it is Jesus Christ who hath brought us salvation: and this is the will of Him that sent Him,—that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth in Him, may have everlasting life; and He will raise him up at the last day. There is no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus; but out of Christ Jesus there can be nothing but condemnation; for out of Christ Jesus



God has neither grace nor salvation to give. He can never show mercy but in conjunction with justice and truth ; and these three can never meet together anywhere but in Jesus Christ. Until man satisfies all the requirements of His law, and presents Him with a full and sufficient sacrifice and satisfaction for his sins, God never can forgive him ; and it was to enable man to do this, to meet all his requirements against him, that God sent forth His Son, and the grace of God which bringeth salvation appeared. The heart of God was set upon being a Saviour ; but the nature of God would never allow Him to be a Saviour otherwise than as a just God. To have for His name "A JUST GOD AND A SAVIOUR" was His desire : and, glory be to His wisdom, He entitled Himself to the Name. Glory be to His wisdom, He saw a way to earn the title ! and, glory be to His

love, He took that way and earned it ! Oh, it was great love ! Brother, listen : “ When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. He so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son ; that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish. And this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that the only begotten Son of God had a body prepared HIM ; and Christ Jesus, the anointed Saviour of God, came into the world to save sinners.” He came to save them, by doing first of all for them what they could never do for themselves,—fulfil all the requirements of God’s law ; or, to use Scripture language, “ *fulfil all righteousness* ;” so that “ by the obedience of ONE many might be made righteous ;” and that

righteousness, says St. Paul, is "*unto all and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference;*" and He came, that after He had fulfilled all righteousness, He might DIE FOR SINNERS, and "*Himself bare our sins in His own body on the tree.*" Rather than bruise us, it pleased the Lord to bruise HIM; and in order to spare us, God spared not HIS OWN SON. To save our souls, He made HIS soul an offering for sin; and that we might be delivered from its burden, He laid on HIM the iniquity of us all. God Himself says of Him, "For the transgression of my people was He stricken;" or as it is in the margin, "*was the stroke upon Him.*" "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities;" and "surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." He was made sin for us, —a curse for us,—was forsaken of God for

us ; or to sum it all up as Peter sums it up, "HE SUFFERED FOR SINS, THE JUST FOR THE UNJUST, THAT HE MIGHT BRING US TO GOD."

Christ then having "*suffered for sins*," or what the sins of the sinner deserved, the justice of God's law is satisfied, and the sinner who believes in Jesus has not now to suffer for His own sins. While confessing and asking pardon for them, he has this unanswerable and ever-prevailing plea, "JESUS CHRIST DIED FOR ME:" and as in answer to the plea they are blotted out, the Lord sees of the travail of His soul, and is satisfied ; and there is joy in the presence of the angels as He rejoices in His title,—“A JUST GOD AND A SAVIOUR.”

But let it be remembered that no sinner really believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, and receives Him as his Saviour, who does

not receive Him as his Teacher. Too many people, alas, are willing to call Him, Lord, Lord ! and to profess faith in Him as making an atonement for them, who seem to make little or no endeavour to do the things which He saith. Yet a man may be sure that he has no scriptural authority for believing that Christ died for him, if he is not conscious of an attempt to live for Christ. It is true that the *first teaching* of the grace of God is, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world ;" and until we receive by faith the doctrine that Jesus Christ died for us, and so took away our sins, we have nothing to do with any of the other doctrines of His Word. He Himself says, *I am the Alpha*,—the *Beginning*,—the *First* ; and the starting point of all true religion is Christ Himself : Christ living for us, Christ dying for us,

Christ entered into heaven there to appear in the presence of God for us. "I delivered unto you *first of all*," says Paul to the Corinthians, "that which I also received : how that Christ died for our sins ;" and until a man receives this as regards his own sins, on the authority of the Word of God, he has not laid THE FOUNDATION which every man must lay, before he can build a spiritual superstructure : he is not on THE ROCK, on which every man must be before he can be saved. The first, and I may say the *only* gospel teaching the grace of God, gives to unconverted, unsaved men, is "*Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ ;*" and until a sinner does that, he has neither part nor lot in the matter.

As soon as, however, a man believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, he becomes, for Christ's sake, a pardoned and a saved man,

and from that moment the grace of God becomes his teacher. Paul, when he wrote to Titus the words I have selected for this little commentary, was writing to a Christian. The grace of God had brought salvation to them both : it was an accomplished fact,—a finished thing ; they HAD passed from death unto life,—they WERE saved. But Titus, like every other Christian, both for his own soul's good and to enable him to do good to others, needed teaching ; and Paul, who never accounted either himself or any body else to have attained, or to be already perfect, and who doubtless was himself taught of God, wrote Titus an epistle of instruction. The particular passage I have selected from it is peculiarly practical and full of teaching ; and may the same God who taught Paul to write to Titus teach me to write to you.

I have already said that the man who does not take Christ for his Teacher has no scriptural warrant for believing Him to be his Saviour, and I now say the same thing in other words,—yet not me, but God (James ii. 20),—that “*Faith without works is dead.*” “This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly,” says Paul to Titus, in another place, “that they who have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works;” and in this place, “The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

Now the grace of God, in this passage of

the epistle, teaches us three things : What to deny,—what to do,—and on what to fix our attention.

First, deny “ungodliness and worldly lusts.” Many may think this easy. Many may think they have nothing in them deserving such names. But God says the thoughts of the hearts of men are evil,—only evil, and that continually ; and not only does he know nothing of himself who thinks he has little or no ungodliness or worldly lusts in him, but who thinks that he has by nature *anything else in him*. To the unbelieving ear of the natural man this seems a hard saying, but it is *the truth of God* ; and the teaching, “deny ungodliness and worldly lusts,” is nothing more than another form of the teaching, “If any man will come after Me, let him *deny himself*,” or “Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath,

he cannot be My disciple." The word translated "lusts" includes the natural tempers, inclinations, affections, and dispositions of men; all and everything in him, in short, that leads him away from God; and man has nothing else—nothing he can call his own, but ungodliness and worldly lusts; and if you will show me a man who is denying these for Christ, I will show you a man who is denying *himself*, and forsaking *all that he hath*.

It is not until a man tries to follow the teaching of the grace of God, and denies ungodliness and worldly lusts, that he begins to find out what is really in his heart. As long as he lets God alone, the devil will let him alone; and it is not until he begins to go to Christ, and to try and follow the leadings of His Spirit, that he learns that, with the best intentions in the world, he cannot

do the things that he would. Once he thought that he could repent and turn to God when he liked ; that when tired of the world, he could easily become religious and get forgiven : but now he discovers that when he would do good, evil is present with him ; that the good that he would he cannot do ; and the evil that he would not, that he does. He finds he is what God told him he was, not what he himself thought he was ; and to teach man to know himself, is one of the earliest teachings of the grace of God. But Satan tries, and sometimes succeeds, while the sinner is undergoing this teaching, in turning it to his great hurt. It is strange that it should be so, but it often is ; and it is thus : as soon as a man, anxious to be a Christian, finds in his own experience that he is exactly what the Bible represents him to be,—*a sinner* (and the Bible, so far at least

as this goes, thus proved to be true),—instead of being, as he ought to be, confirmed in the faith of the whole, he is tempted to disbelieve the other teaching,—that God for Christ's sake will forgive his sins. The Bible always told him he was a great sinner, but also that though his sins were as red as scarlet, God, if he would go to Him, would wash him white as snow; and so long as he had no real experience of being a great sinner, he believed that he could any day get forgiveness, and some day hoped he should. But when his very endeavours to be holy only prove to him how truly the Bible has described him, and that he is not only a great, but a helpless sinner, he is tempted to disbelieve what it says about forgiveness, and to think himself too bad to be saved. It was only yesterday that I visited a young creature suffering under this


temptation. She had always been respected and respectable,—externally religious, and morally upright more than many. She had not only been a regular attendant at church and at the Lord's table, but had been in the habit of teaching in Sabbath schools, and visiting the poor and needy. In those days she professed to believe the Bible, and thought she did ; and with satisfaction often asked herself, as some perhaps who read this description of her may ask, What did she require more ? About three years ago it pleased God to teach her that she did require something more ; that a mere performance of religious duties, outward uprightness of conduct, or even unselfish labours for the sake of others, was not CHRIST ; and that nothing but having Christ Himself could supply a sinner's need, or save his soul. So far as she knows she has not yet got Christ ;

and she is passing through the great danger of which I have spoken above,—the temptation to believe that she is too great a sinner to be saved. God has shown her somewhat of the truth about herself; and I would to God that every one of whom the same truth is true, knew it as she seems to know it. I had the facts of the description I have given of her from her own lips; and she ended it with these words: “*All that time*” (the time she was teaching in the Sabbath schools, etc.) “*my heart was as black as ink, and my soul dark as night.*” Poor thing, I would not contradict a word of what she said, for so far she was right. Doubtless she, and you and I, are all so wicked, that nothing but God being made man, and shedding His blood to save us, could save us. But He HAS been made man, and He has shed His blood to save us: and now, be you black

as the Ethiopian, that blood can wash you white; and be your soul as dark as midnight, that blood can make it light.

This temptation to despair comes to us under a false name, and, professing to be humility, is in reality nothing but self-righteousness. This poor girl and others of her class refuse to believe in the forgiveness of their sins, simply because they find they are wickeder than they thought they were. Could they find anything like *goodness in themselves*, anything that they thought could recommend them to God, they would believe they were saved directly. But would that be believing in Jesus Christ? Would it not rather be believing in their own righteousness? Let a man be as bad as he may, he never can be as bad in his own sight as he is in God's; but let him be as bad as he may, the Blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, can

wash him clean. The Blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth from ALL sin ; and the man who refuses to believe in the pardon of his sins because he finds himself much wickeder than he thought he was, refuses to believe in the efficacy of the Blood of Christ to wash out *great sins*, and by his unbelief commits a greater sin than any other he could ever possibly have committed. Man is a sinner, and will be a sinner to the end of his life. The body of sin and death will cling to him until this mortal puts on immortality, and death is swallowed up in victory ; but the teaching of the grace of God is not, "Do not *feel* ungodliness and worldly lusts, but DENY THEM." Ungodliness and worldly lusts are in us ; as I have said before, we have nothing else by nature we can call our own ; if we have anything else, it is the gift of the grace of God, and



not us, but Christ dwelling in us ; and as long as we are in the body, ungodliness and worldly lusts WILL make themselves felt. But because we find ourselves sinners, let us not make God a liar, which we do if we say we are too bad to be saved. Deny the ungodliness when it rises ; crucify the flesh when it lusteth against the spirit ; but never add to all your other sins, the sin of unbelief. Rather when Satan tempts you with the thought that with such ungodliness in you you cannot be a child of God, ask him how it is, that having it in you, you do not habitually obey it. “His you are,” says God, “to whom you yield yourself servant to obey ;” and if Satan cannot get you to *obey him*, *there MUST BE IN YOU a stronger Spirit than Satan !*

But the grace of God which bringeth salvation teaches us something more than a

mere negative religion. To deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, or, in other words, *not to do wickedness, and rest contented there*, is never the whole teaching of the Holy Spirit. St. John tells us, "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever *doeth not righteousness* is not of God." It is not merely whosoever doeth not *wickedness*, but whosoever doeth not *righteousness*; and in New Testament history, the judgments recorded are almost invariably mentioned as being executed for *leaving undone*. The foolish virgins, the unprofitable servant, those on the left hand of the Judge who "*did it not*," were all condemned, not *for what they did*, but *for what they did not*; and therefore the grace of God not only teaches us what to deny, but what to do. Deny "ungodliness and worldly lusts,"

and "*live soberly, righteously, and godly.*" "The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, *we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.*" The sober, righteous, godly living is as necessarily the fruit of faith in Christ as the other; and, in God's sight, no man ever yet truly mortified the deeds of the body, who did not produce the fruits of the Spirit. The sober, righteous, godly-living, I understand to include our duty to ourselves, our duty to our neighbour, and our duty towards God; and the man who names the Name of the Lord Jesus, and makes little or no attempt to perform these duties, makes little or no attempt to depart from iniquity.

And now, "the grace of God which

bringeth salvation," having taught us what to deny and what to do, tells us on what to fix our attention. Is it on our ungodliness and worldly lusts, or on our sober, righteous, godly living? No: by no means; for nothing can well be more hurtful to any man than to be continually looking at either. For a man to be always looking, no matter whether at his badness or his goodness, is to be always looking at SELF; and the man who is always looking at SELF need never expect to rise above SELF. It matters little on which of the two he keeps his eyes,—be it on his badness or his goodness, the inquiry to himself will be very much the same. He who is constantly contemplating his badness will be tempted to despair; he who is always looking at what he fancies his goodness, will be tempted to be self-righteous. They are both snares of the devil,

set to catch those who either take from or add to, the teaching of the grace of God ; and to him who lives and dies in either, both are alike fatal. Of the two, I think the state of the self-righteous man the most hopeless ; for while both have the same need, and can only be saved in the same way, the poor despairing sinner sees what the self-righteous man does not see,—that salvation is all of grace ; and knows what the self-righteous man does not know,—that he is a hell-deserving sinner. Be this as it may, however, both despair and self-righteousness are soul-destroying sins, and unless they are watched against, and fought against, and got the better of, will destroy those who are tempted by them. They both arise from the same cause,—an undue contemplation of SELF ; from taking SELF out of the place in which God has told us to keep it. Our

duty towards SELF is to compel it to leave undone what God tells us to leave undone, and to compel it to do what He tells us to do ; and then, having done this, to leave self to the grace of God,—*to think no more about it.* The grace of God says, When ungodliness and worldly lusts arise in the heart and make themselves felt, deny them ; deny them and turn from them, until they arise and make themselves felt again ; then deny them, and turn from them again : but the grace of God does not say, *Be always looking at your own wickedness.* The grace of God says, “Live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world ;” doing your duty to God and man in the station of life in which God has placed you ; but it does not say, *Be always looking at your own righteousness :* and the Christian soldier may be assured that he will have enough

to do to obey the two first teachings of the grace of God, without depriving himself of the strength he will obtain by obedience to the third.

The most profitable thing for a man to contemplate, is Christ, and the things of Christ; the most profitable thing for a man to do, is to acquaint himself with God. God is revealed in the person of His Son, and while no man hath seen God at any time, he who hath seen the Son hath seen the Father also. In contemplating self, we can never get beyond the knowledge that self is what God told us it was before we began to study it,—“*deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;*” and any other conclusion about self, is false; but in contemplating Christ, we contemplate Him who sent Christ, and learn to know God. *Not to know God is everlasting destruction*

(2 Thess. i. 8, 9); but *this is life eternal, to know God the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom He hath sent.* (John xvii. 3.)

Any thing that takes man's eyes off Christ, weakens him for the Christian conflict; and therefore,—as in this place, so through the whole of Scripture,—the soldier of Jesus Christ is commanded to fight, wrestle, strive, and endure hardness; not looking to his own efforts, but “*looking unto Jesus.*”

One of the first suggestions of Satan to a soul beginning to be anxious about the future, is, “*You can do nothing;*” and Satan so far speaks the truth, for the teaching of the Lord Jesus is the same,—“*You can do nothing;*” but the Lord adds, “**WITHOUT ME.**” “*Without Me,*” says Jesus, “*you can do nothing.*” And how glorious in his belief, and worthy of all following is Paul, when grasping this teaching of Christ, the

“WITHOUT ME,” and looking completely away from the devil’s teaching,—“*You can do nothing,*”—in the fulness of the assurance of faith, and of trust in the strength of the Lord, he exclaims, “I CAN DO ALL THINGS.” “*I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me.*” Now what Paul believed is what the Christian is called upon to believe also; and let him only believe, and strive to obey in the strength of the Lord, and there is no command God has given him, from “*Repent, and believe the Gospel,*” to “*Be ye perfect,*” which sooner or later he shall not be enabled to obey.

It is because that while we can do nothing without Him, we can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth us, that Jesus Christ, sometimes in one aspect sometimes in another, is the ONE OBJECT always presented by the Scriptures for the

contemplation of His fighting people. In the passage before us, it is the second coming of the Lord, and not the conflict, on which Christians are taught to look. Deny ungodliness and worldly lusts ; live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world, but let not your thoughts rest habitually on your denying the one or doing the other. "Be patient," as St. James says, "unto the coming of the Lord," and keep your thoughts on the hope set before you in the Gospel,—"*that blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*"

I would here mention that this name,—"the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ,"—is ONE NAME. No man (I again quote from Scripture) hath seen God at any time ; but when God would show Himself to man, He "MANIFESTS HIMSELF IN

THE FLESH ;” and *God manifested in the flesh, is Jesus Christ.* Thus Paul, giving to Timothy, in other words, the very same exhortations that in this passage he gives to Titus, concludes, “I give thee charge . . . that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of *our Lord Jesus Christ : which in His times He shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords ; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto ; whom no man hath seen, nor can see : to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.*” This, “the Lord Jesus Christ, the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords ; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto ; whom no man hath seen, nor can see : to whom be honour

and power everlasting," is ONE NAME,—THE NAME OF HIM who in the beginning was with God, and who was God; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven; who was made flesh, was crucified, dead, and buried; who rose again and ascended up where He was before, and shall so come in like manner. It is this Name that gives us our blessed hope; and when those that are alive and remain are caught up with the risen dead in Christ to meet the Lord in the air, and He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe, it will be God manifest in the flesh that we shall see; it will be "the glorious appearing of THE GREAT GOD AND OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.


And how God-like in His wisdom, and how far more capable of teaching us than

we are of teaching ourselves must He be, who has directed us to keep our eyes on this blessed hope! What counsel that we could ever give ourselves could be so calculated to strengthen and uphold! What view that we could ever get of any thing in ourselves so likely to make us endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ; or to remain steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord? May God grant us to live like men who wait for their Lord, looking not on the things that are seen,—not on pleasures or afflictions, which are but for a moment; but looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, and that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. Let us remember that this is no uncertain hope; and that, however terrible the conflict, the ultimate triumph

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is quite sure ; for. that God *always* giveth him the victory who, looking unto Jesus, holds fast and fights on. God does not say the Christian shall not be tried. God does not say he shall not be tempted, nor does He say he shall never fall nor be cast down ; but He does say he shall not be tempted above that he is able ; that no weapon formed against him shall prosper, and that he shall be made more than conqueror through Him that loved him. One of the things on which we are commanded to keep our eyes, is that our labour can never be in vain in the Lord,—that in due season we *must* reap, *if we faint not*,—if never to our own experience before, then certainly at the coming of the Lord. But it will be to your own experience long before.

The coming of the Lord ! Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered



into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him ; but even taking what is revealed, what is there left out that a soldier of Jesus Christ even in the very utmost yearnings of his heart can long for, that will not in that day be granted to him exceeding abundantly above all that he can ask or think. Having fought manfully against the world, the flesh, and the devil, his warfare will be accomplished, and he will find himself in the ranks of that noble army who have finished their course, have kept the faith, and have *overcome*. Henceforth there is rest from conflict, rest from trial, rest from sin. Henceforth there is laid up for him a crown of righteousness, and the gifts promised to him who *overcometh*, which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give him at that day.

1. "To him that overcometh," saith the

great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, "will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

2. "He that overcometh," saith the same great God and Saviour, "shall not be hurt of the second death."

3. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving him that receiveth it."

4. "He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken in shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star."

5. "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not

blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels."

6. "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out : and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God ; and I will write upon him my new name."

7. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me on my throne, even as I overcame, and am set down with my Father on His throne."

8. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things ; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."

These are some of the rewards of victory promised to the soldier that *overcometh* ;

and verily they are exceeding great. Great enough, surely, to encourage any man to take up his cross and follow Jesus; great enough to keep him steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. Great beyond human comprehension, however, as they are, there is a greater still set before the eyes of the Christian soldier, as he meditates on the second coming of his Lord. St. John takes but few words to tell us what it is; but if in its height, and breadth, and length, and depth, it had been opened out to us, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written! The world, did I say, would have been too small to contain the books? That is nothing! Eternity itself will be too short fully to reveal to him that overcometh, what it was to which he attained at the glorious appearing of the

great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. "*When He shall appear,*" says St. John, "*WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM, for we shall see Him as He is.*" I will not enlarge on this now. Christians *now* are the sons of God, and Christ is not ashamed to call them brethren, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be.

Oh, tempted, tried, persecuted, and per-adventure, wounded and fallen soldier, will not this blessed revelation brace you up, and nerve you to arise and fight the good fight of faith? On the testimony of God you may receive into your heart of hearts this truth,—that if, instead of looking to yourself, you will look to **THE LORD** for strength, and press on nothing terrified by your adversaries, towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, you shall most certainly overcome ;

and if you overcome, as certainly as God is Truth, every promise I have quoted shall be fulfilled to you in your own person. To deny ungodliness and worldly lusts ; to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world may be distasteful to you, but *it* is the teaching of the Grace of God, and you *must* learn to obey it, or perish. As Moses was in Egypt, so are you now shut up to one of two things,—either “to suffer affliction with the people of God,” or “to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.” Moses “*had regard to the recompense of the reward,*” for he did not think the sufferings of this present world worthy to be compared with the glory which should be revealed in him, and he cast in his lot with the people of God. What will you do ? It must have been a hard struggle for Moses, and it may be a hard struggle for you ; but whatever it

cost him then, do you think Moses is sorry now? And whatever it costs you now, if you follow his example and cast in your lot with the people of God, do you think you will be sorry at the glorious appearing of the Great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ? Remember you *can* do all things through Christ strengthening you. Only turn your eyes away from everything except Him, and accepting Him *now* to be to you what He promises to be to you *now*, believe in Him to be to you henceforth what He promises to be to you henceforth, and you shall be strengthened by His Spirit to crucify self, and to choose that better part which shall never be taken from you. It was for the joy set before Him that Christ endured the Cross and despised the shame, and it is for the sake of the joy set before you that I now press on you to take up

your cross and follow Christ. His cross and His shame are over, and He is now sitting at the Right Hand of the Throne of God. He sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied. Your cross, and whatever it may bring with it, are before you, and it is for you to say whether you will deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Jesus, or whether you will follow some other teacher. May the Lord the Spirit be the Author of your decision, keeping your eyes on that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, *who gave Himself for us.*

“WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US.” These are the words that come next in order in the passage we are considering, and are the teaching of the Grace of God. *The Great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ* GAVE HIMSELF FOR US! Wonderful words, and at

least as true as wonderful. Try and grasp something of their meaning. Man was lost. You have often heard of people being lost,—that by nature everybody is lost; but did you ever think about the meaning of being lost? To be lost means not only that we have lost God, but that God has lost us. Before the fall of Adam man belonged to God,—he was part of His family,—His child; but when he sinned man not only lost God, but *God lost man*. The wages of sin is death, and when man sinned, God in His justice was compelled to give him up to him who had the power of death, and he became the prey of the mighty enemy of man, the lawful captive of Satan; and instead of God being his Father and his rightful home heaven, the devil became his father and his rightful home hell. But the Loving Spirit of God yearned after His

lost ones, and He longed to get them back. In spite of all their rebellion, His delights were with the sons of men : but how could the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered ? The question was asked in heaven ; but neither angel nor archangel, or any of the company there, could answer it, for even for the power of God this seemed impossible. By God's own law they were the lawful captives of Satan, and God could not break His own law. The devil and his angels had no fear, the angels of God no hope, when "THUS SAITH THE LORD, *Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered.*" (Isaiah xlix. 24, 25.) THEN the devils believed and trembled, and the angels believed, and there was joy in heaven, for both angels and devils knew, *though they knew not how*, that having said

it, God had found a ransom, and could deliver the lawful captive and save from going down into the pit. Through all creation there is not an unbeliever but man. When once the word, no matter about what, has gone forth from God's lips, devils as well as angels believe it; they are *full of assurance*,—they have *no doubt*. If man, for whom Christ died, had the faith of devils, or in other words, was as firmly persuaded of the truth of God's Words as devils are, he would never have the portion of devils. He would believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved.

But though they believed in the deliverance, little did either angels or devils imagine that it was the great God who, in the person of His Son, was to be the Deliverer. But **THE GREAT GOD** had a body prepared Him (Heb. x. 5), and the God-

MAN, taking unto himself His new name, "THE GREAT GOD AND OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST," *came into the world to save sinners.* He gave HIMSELF for us. "*He was made,*" St. Paul tells us, "*a little lower than the angels* FOR THE SUFFERING OF DEATH ; *that HE, by the grace of God should taste death for every man ;*" and again, that "*As the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that, THROUGH DEATH, He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, THE DEVIL.* (Heb. ii. 9 and 14.)

Glory, power, praise, and honour
Be unto the Lamb for ever ;
Jesus Christ is our Redeemer :
Hallelujah. Praise the Lord.

Let us now inquire with what object it was that the great God and our Saviour


Jesus Christ so set His heart upon delivering "the lawful captives." Was it only to save them from going down into the pit? Let the Grace of God, which bringeth salvation, answer. "The great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ gave Himself for us, *that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*"

"The great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ," says the teaching of the Grace of God, "gave Himself for us," first, "*that He might redeem us from all iniquity.*"

The consequences of sin are threefold. It has entailed on the sinner not only its guilt and punishment, but its power continually to make him sin, and consequently continually to bring him into condemnation. Before Adam fell he was not under the power of sin,—sin had no dominion over

him ; but after the fall, he not only became subject to its guilt and punishment, but also to its power. When Adam sinned, he died,—that is, God left him ; and to be without God is death : and in that instant Satan took possession of him, and he became in every sense his lawful captive. Now as man is not so strong as Satan, it follows of course that so long as man is held by him, he must be led captive by him at his will.

Now the real object for which the Man Christ Jesus lived and died was to redeem man from ALL iniquity ; to deliver him not only from the guilt and punishment of sin, but also from its condemning power, and ultimately not only from its power altogether, but also from its very presence. But before he could even begin this work He had to make man His own ; and this



He could only do by making a full and sufficient sacrifice, satisfaction, and oblation for him ; or, in other words, by taking the punishment of his sins : and this He did. He who knew no sin was not only made sin for us, but bore them in His own Body on the tree : and now says St. Paul, "*We have redemption through His Blood, even the forgiveness of sins.*" He who accepts this redemption, has it,—is made as free from sin in God's sight as if he had never sinned at all, and becomes a member of the only Church on earth worth the name : "*the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own Blood.*" (Acts xx. 28.) From that moment he owes God nothing but to love Him, for this Blood satisfies all demands against him ; this Blood makes the captive of Satan the Lord's freed man ; this Blood makes God his Father again, and makes

him God's Son. This is redemption: the sinner redeemed, paid for, purchased back from him to whom he had sold himself; and coming out of his captivity so thoroughly washed and justified, that God Himself pronounces him without spot and clean, for He can see no iniquity upon him. He is in Christ, and his life is hid with Christ in God; he is one with Christ, and he can never again be anything but a member of the Body of Christ; he is cleansed from all sin, and God can never and will never see sin on him again. The moment a man believeth in Jesus, so far as redemption is concerned, the object of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ is accomplished; for he that believeth on Him shall never perish, shall never come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life: he is delivered from the guilt, the punishment, and the con-

demning power of sin ; he is redeemed from all iniquity ; he is saved.

But now let me ask with Paul, "What shall we say then ? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound ? God forbid." And again, "Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace ? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey ; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness." (Rom. vi. 1 and 15, -16.) The great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ gave Himself for us, not only "that He might redeem us from all iniquity," but that He might "*purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works ;*" not only that He might save from the pit, but fit us for heaven ; not only get us out of the possession of Satan, but restore us to the image of God. Restoration

to the image of God is the ultimate purpose of the grace of God, and is "*that blessed hope*" set before us in the Gospel. "*When He shall appear, we shall be like Him,*" says St. John; but adds in the very next verse, "*Every one who hath this hope in Him, purifieth himself:*" and he who says he has this hope in Him, and yet knows nothing of an inward desire and struggle to purify himself, has no Scriptural warrant for thinking he is under the teaching of the grace of God. The purposes of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ can never be defeated, and He gave Himself for us, not only to redeem us, but that, under the teaching of His Spirit, we might become a purified and peculiar people, zealous of good works: and he who thinks he can be Christ's without being not only a purified but a peculiar person, is a self-

deceiver ; and his teacher is not the grace of God, but, be he man or devil, a liar. Christ is the Brightness of His Father's glory, and the express Image of His Person ; and the ultimate aim, I again repeat, of all Christ's work is to make us like Himself,—GODLIKE. This is begun in us the moment we are really Christ's, and progresses until *the glorious appearing*, when His people will be exactly conformed to the Image of God's Son. Can a man, then, in this present world be in the least Christlike, Godlike, conformed to the Image of Him who was always zealous of good works, without being *a peculiar person*? The word in the original signifies "a person peculiarly His own."

And now a word in conclusion. Christ gave HIMSELF for us : are you willing to give YOURSELF for Christ ? Count the cost, for here is the offer. If you will give your-

self for Christ, Christ will give *Himself* for you. His *whole self* mind. Himself past, Himself present, Himself future. Himself past : His life, His death, His resurrection, His ascension, and a seat on His Throne with Him in heaven ; so that from this moment God shall see you already sitting together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. (Ephes. ii. 6.) Himself present : He will enter into you and dwell in you on the instant that you believe in Him. If you do it now, He will enter into you now, and be an immediate and present Saviour to you. Himself future : from the moment you give *yourself* to Him, you need take no anxious thought for to-morrow, but may boldly say, The Lord is my helper. All things shall work together for your good ; for lo, He will be with you alway, even unto the end of the world.

But if you are to have Christ, you must give YOURSELF for Him. Yourself past, yourself present, yourself future. This must be your covenant with Him, God helping you ; and do not be afraid to make the covenant, for He *will* help you. Yourself past : oh, how gladly we would all give this to Christ ! all its good bits, if you fancy you have any ; for mind you must give Him ALL that you have,—all its bad bits. Oh, how glad you will be to get rid of self-past, especially when you look at His self-past, which you get in exchange. Yourself present : oh, do not hesitate, determine to-day, while it is called to-day, to give *yourself* to Christ ; keeping your eyes, not on the cross which your gift entails, but on the gift you will receive in exchange,—*Himself present*. Yourself future : getting Christ in exchange for *yourself*, remember you are no longer

your own, but bought with a price ; and that while He appears in the presence of God for you, that you are to glorify God on the earth in your body and in your spirit, which are God's, and appear in the presence of men for Him.

Farewell. Remember you cannot keep both CHRIST and SELF ; or to put it as Christ Himself puts it, "*No man can serve two masters.*"

"HE WHICH TESTIFIETH THESE THINGS SAITH, SURELY I COME QUICKLY. AMEN. EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS."

**CHRIST THE SAVIOUR:
CHRIST THE JUDGE.**



CHRIST THE SAVIOUR: CHRIST THE JUDGE.

REMARKS ON JOHN V. 16—30.

And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath day.

But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.

Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do

nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do : for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth : and He will show Him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them ; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will.

For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son :

That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation ; but is passed from death unto life.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the

voice of the Son of God : and they that hear shall live.

For as the Father hath life in Himself ; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself ;

And hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man.

Marvel not at this : for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice,

And shall come forth ; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

I can of mine own self do nothing : as I hear, I judge : and my judgment is just ; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me.

THE Lord Jesus Christ having healed a man on the Sabbath-day, told him to take up his bed and walk ; and immediately he did what the Lord told him to do, and by doing

so offended the Jews. From that day to this the three facts mentioned in this short sentence have ever been the same. First, Jesus never yet healed any person without telling them how to walk ; next, the only evidence that he has healed any person, is that he is trying to walk as Jesus has told him ; and, lastly, nobody yet ever tried to walk as Jesus told him without giving offence to the men and women of this world. Thanks be to God for the dispensation under which we live, though the animosity against God and His people is as great as ever, it cannot now show itself as it once could, and a Christian can walk the streets without fear of being stoned ; nevertheless, the offence of the Cross has not ceased, and now as then, he who tries to follow Jesus and walk in His ways, suffers persecution. If you know nothing of persecution, ex-

amine yourself whether you are trying to walk as Jesus has told you ; and if you are not trying to walk as Jesus has told you, examine yourself as to whether you have ever been made whole.

The Jews however when they learned that it was Jesus who had healed the man, and told him to take up his bed and walk, seem to have left him to go quietly home with his burden, and to have transferred their anger to the Lord. We read, in the first verse of the passage which I have chosen for the foundation of these remarks, that "Therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath day." Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out ! Truly the wrath

of man shall praise Thee ! This Pharisaical wickedness and gross perversion of the Word of God was made the instrument in His hands of drawing forth from the Lord Jesus revelations of the very deepest things of God ; revelations which, speaking after the manner of men, we might never have had but for this wrath of man ; revelations plain and simple when revealed, yet affecting beyond any thing we can understand, the condition of the human race ; revelations more precious than gold and sweeter than honey in the honey-comb, yet so utterly beyond the comprehension of the wisdom of man, that it never could have entered into his heart even to conceive them, if the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father had not been pleased to declare them. I know no passage in Scripture that reveals to us more plainly, and that from

His own lips, Who and what the Lord Jesus is : *the Son of God, One with the Father, God over all blessed for ever ; yet the Son of man, man's brother ; anointed of God, Christ the Saviour, Christ the Judge.* All this and more than this is revealed to us in this short passage,—for it reveals to us also *what Christ can do.* These things will I try and prove, as I go on to remark upon His words.

“Therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath day.” Jesus answered and said, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” Plain statement! and though modern sceptics may deny it, easily understood by the Jews to whom it was addressed. Their conduct shows how they understood it. “Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He

had not only broken the Sabbath, but said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God." Now there was a sense in which the Jews claimed God to be their Father, and thought it not blasphemy. See their own words to Jesus (John viii. 41): "We have one Father, even God;" but it is quite clear they understood Him in a far different sense to claim God for His Father. They understood, what they said they understood when they tried to kill Him,—that *He being a man, made Himself equal with God*. And so He did: and so I understood it when I first read the passage with a desire to be taught of God; and at the risk of being thought egotistical, I will digress to tell a story of my own experience, for I think it may be useful.

It is now a little more than eighteen years ago, when, then an elderly man, I first

went to God through Jesus Christ. From that day I made a habit of reading His Word, and seeking before I read, the teaching of the Holy Spirit. It was about three weeks after I had begun to do this, that part of my portion was the passage we are now considering ; and as far as I can remember, the last words I read before my thoughts wandered from my Bible, were those I have last quoted : “ My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” I then seem to have left the letter of the Word, and began to meditate. I hardly know where or to what my thoughts wandered ; I am quite sure I was thinking about God and Christ and the revelations of the Bible ; but I am as sure that my thoughts were not taught me by God or Christ, or by His revelations. I am quite sure too that I must have continued for some time with my brain hard at work ; for

the end of the meditation was a violent headache, which roused me. I had been thinking probably for hours about *the plainly revealed, but unexplained, mysteries of God*; and was no wiser: they still remained revealed, and still unexplained; and all the fruit of my thinking seemed a headache. But by the mercy of Him who ruleth and overruleth as He pleases, I think I got something better. I soon began to think again; but my thoughts took a different train. "Brownlow North," I said (speaking to myself aloud in some such words as these), "do you think by your own reason or deep thinking you can find out God, or know Christ better than the Bible can teach you to know Him? If you do not, why are you perplexing your brains with worse than useless speculations? Why are you not learning, and holding on by what you learn, from the Scriptures?"

You are shut up to one of two things : you must either make a God and a religion for yourself, and stand or fall eternally by it, or you must take the religion of Jesus Christ as revealed to you in His Word. You cannot receive a little of God's teaching and a little of your own ; you cannot believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and the wisdom of your own heart at the same time. Choose then, now and for ever, by which you will stand or fall." I remember striking my hand forcibly on the open Bible that lay before me, and saying, "God helping me, I will stand or fall by the Lord Jesus Christ. I will put my trust in His truth, and in His teaching, as I find it in the written Word of God ; and doing that, so sure as the Lord Jesus Christ is the truth, I **MUST BE** a forgiven and saved man." From that hour to this, so far as the doctrines necessary to

salvation are concerned, I have never had any difficulties with what are called the difficulties of the Bible. If God there says to me what is above, or beyond, or in appearance contradictory to my reason, then, though with my natural senses I cannot understand it, *I believe it, and receive it,*—because *it is the Word of God*. Thus in the fortieth verse of the very chapter we are considering, the Lord Jesus says to the Jews, “*Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life,*”—evidently implying that the fault was with them ; yet in the very next chapter, verse 41, He as plainly tells them, “*No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him.*” I cannot reconcile these two,—that a man justly suffers the penalty of eternal death for not coming to Christ, and yet that of himself he *cannot* come. But though I cannot re-



concile them, I believe them both, because they both are the Word of God. I believe that if I do not come it is my own fault ; but that if I do come, it is by the grace of God. And I believe this not only to be true, but just and right ; for, as St. Paul asks, shall not the Judge of all the earth do right ? But though I believe them both, I make neither of these texts the starting point or foundation of my religion. Jesus Christ says, "*I am the beginning ;*" and a little above the verse I have just quoted from John vi., He says, "*Him that cometh to Me I will in nowise cast out.*" These two texts at least are plain : therefore because Christ says "*I am the beginning,*" I BEGIN with Him, and go to Him ; and because He says He will not cast me out, I believe He will not cast me out. BEFORE I have done this, I think about no other text. *Christ* is my beginning, *Christ* is my

foundation ; but AFTER I have begun with Christ, I can consider the texts above quoted, or any other texts you please. Considering those of which we are speaking, I say I have been to Christ, therefore I must have been drawn by the Father ; and whatever else I may have been guilty of, He can never say of me what He said of the Jews, " You will not come to Me that you might have life." This way of receiving the Scriptures is, I believe, what the Lord Jesus meant when He says, " Except ye receive the kingdom of God as a little child, ye shall in nowise enter therein." We all know how a little child receives the word of its father. Suppose it was about to begin a difficult book ; and its father said, as God says about the Bible, That book is past your comprehension. Come to me before you begin it, and I will teach you. What do you think the child would under-

stand, and do ? And suppose the first statement it read contradicted its senses : for instance, that the sun did not move round the earth, but the earth round the sun ? That is foolishness, says the child to its father ; for *I see* the sun move. It was looking in at my window this morning, and now it is looking in at yours. For all that, says the Father, the book is right, and your eyes deceive you : we move round the sun, not the sun round us. Did you ever hear of a child who doubted such a truth when told it by such a teacher ? Would he not rather, full of faith, run to his young companions with his news, and teach them what his father had taught him.


It was when considering the passage now before us that I first determined in this spirit ever after to endeavour to receive the Word of God,—to receive in their plain

literal sense the plain literal statements of the Bible. "The wisdom of this world, says the Scripture, "is foolishness with God;" and I solemnly call on you, before you read another word, to "cease from your own wisdom," to "lean not to your own understanding." You are about to consider a passage full of the most precious revelations,—revelations able to make you wise unto salvation; but as the word preached did not profit those that came out of Egypt, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it, so neither unless you believe it will it profit you. You must believe it, and believe it without any other reason for believing it than that it is the Word of God, or it will be unto you a savour of death unto death; better for you if you had never heard it at all.

But to return to my subject. "Therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and

sought to slay Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath day. But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the Sabbath, but said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do." The works that my Father doeth and my works are in perfect unison. Not only can the Son do nothing contrary to the Father, nothing antagonistic, only what He seeth the Father do,—but there is no work of the Father that may not with equal propriety be attributed to the Son, "for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." Therefore did I say unto you

that as on Sabbath days as well as other days my Father worketh ; so, because He worketh, I work. From the day of creation until now He has never ceased to work : neither have I. By Me He made the worlds. By Me were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible,—whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers. All things were created by Me, and for Me ; and from the time of their creation until now, I have upheld all things by the word of My power. By Me the sun has been made to shine upon the just and upon the unjust ; by Me the rain has been given from heaven, and fruitful seasons filling your hearts with joy and gladness ; in Me, as One with the Father, your very selves have lived and moved, and had your being ; and if for one single moment, on week-day or Sabbath,



I had left you without My care, in that single moment you would have been utterly destroyed. The Father worketh hitherto, and I work,—for what things soever He doeth the same doeth the Son likewise.

These are the words of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and the exposition I have given of them is the exposition of the Scriptures.

Reading this passage, as I did, just after determining to receive the kingdom of God as a little child, who do you think I must have believed the Lord Jesus to be? If you asked a little child who He must be that did whatever God did, would he not at once say, He must be God too? Most certainly he would: and he would be right,—for Jesus *is* God too; and yet there are not two Gods. Human reason says, If it is right to say the Father is God, and the Son is God, then

there must be two Gods. But what says he who believes his Bible, and receives the kingdom of God as a little child? The Father is God, and the Son is God; yet there are not two Gods, but One God: for Jesus Christ hath said, "I AND MY FATHER ARE ONE." Taking my stand on this teaching of the Lord Jesus, I sometimes ask HIM to do for me what I require; and sometimes the Father; and if in the great day of account I should be asked my warrant for so doing, I would point to this Scripture and say, the Lord Jesus Christ told me that "*Whatsoever things the Father doeth, the same doeth the Son likewise.*"

But let us go on with the passage: "For," continues our Lord, "the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth: and He will show *Him* greater works than these, that ye may

marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them ; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will."

The Lord Jesus here continues, in even more plain and positive language, to assert His equality with the Father. He had healed a man who had an infirmity thirty and eight years, and declared that His power to do it was that He had all the power that God had ; and His right to do it, that He had all the right that God had ; but God could do greater works, or at all events more marvellous in the sight of men, than healing the sick ; and these greater works He too would yet do in their sight, that they might marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will. I will give you the same evidence of WHO I am, as I gave

to John the Baptist when he sent to Me his disciples ; as they saw, so shall you “also see and hear,” how that not only “the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear ; but that the dead are raised, to the poor the Gospel is preached ; and blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me. I know that you will be offended in Me, and that all I can say or do will not convert you ; for if ye believe not Moses and the Prophets, neither will you be persuaded though one rose from the dead ; and you do not believe in Moses, for had you believed Moses, you would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me ; still I will do before your eyes the mighty works that God alone can do, so that you shall be without excuse. If I do not the works of my Father, believe Me *not*. But if I do, though ye believe not

Me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him. And these greater works in the eyes of men He did do. In their houses, in their streets, in their burying places,—not only raising the dead out of whom the breath of life had but just departed, but by overcoming it in every stage; proving to all that as the Father raiseth the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will. “Thy daughter is dead,” said the servants of Jairus: “why troubleth thou the Master any further?” but as soon as Jesus heard it, and before Jairus had time to speak, He answered: “*Be not afraid, believe only.*” And He took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, TALITHA, cumi; which is, being interpreted, damsel, I say unto thee arise: and straightway the damsel arose and walked.

Again: when He was come nigh to the city of Nain, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her, and said unto her, "Weep not." And He came and touched the bier, and said unto Him that was dead, "*Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.*" And he that was dead, sat up and began to speak. Again: Jesus said to His disciples, "Lazarus is dead; and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there to the intent ye may believe. Nevertheless, let us go to him." Jesus cometh to the grave: "It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto Him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest

believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? And Jesus lifted up His eyes, and said, Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me. And I know that Thou hearest Me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And when He thus had spoken, He cried with a loud voice, *Lazarus, come forth.* And he that was dead came forth."

It is highly probable that the Lord may have raised many more dead to life than are here recorded; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life through His name. If you receive the kingdom of God as a little child, you believe that as the Father raiseth the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will;

and if you do not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, you shall in no wise enter therein.

But I believe our Lord meant something far higher than the power of raising dead bodies, when He said to the Jews, and so revealed to men, "*the Son quickeneth whom He will.*" When Christ came, all men were by nature dead in trespasses and sins: they are so still; and have been ever since the fall of Adam. Death,—not death temporal merely, but death spiritual,—death eternal has passed upon all men, for that all have sinned; and I believe that God our Saviour, when He declared, "*the Son quickeneth whom He will,*" meant us to understand that not only had He the power to raise to life dead bodies, but *to quicken dead souls*. His words demand our deepest and most prayerful consideration. "The Father loveth the

Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth ; and He will show Him *greater WORKS THAN THESE* that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickened them, even so the Son QUICKENETH WHOM HE WILL." Now the greater works than these, may, and probably do, refer to greater miracles than the cure of the impotent man ; but they have also, I believe, a far deeper spiritual meaning. They mean that the Son who did nothing of Himself but as His Father taught Him (John viii. 28), who did not even speak but as the Father which sent Him gave Him commandment (John xii. 49), was about to do greater works than any the Father had ever done, or ever could have done but for the coming of the Son. He who uttered them, the Man Christ Jesus, was about to give to God the only power God had not,—

THE POWER TO FORGIVE SIN. How often is He declared in Scripture to be "*the power of God!*" The power of God to destroy him who had the power of death. The power of God to deliver Satan's lawful captives, and save from going down into the pit; the power of God unto salvation; to quicken, or make alive dead souls. "We preach Christ crucified," says St. Paul, "to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness, but to them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, CHRIST THE POWER OF GOD, and the wisdom of God." And again, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is THE POWER OF GOD UNTO SALVATION TO EVERY ONE THAT BELIEVETH." All things, saith our Lord, are possible with God, and nothing is impossible with Him; but it was the work of the Son that made all things possible to the Father, and once

all things were not possible. The Father always had *life in Himself*. There never was a time when He could not take the clods of the valley, or the dust of the earth, and breathing into them the breath of life make them living souls ; there never was a time when after the body had returned to the dust and the spirit to Him who gave it, that He could not reunite, spirit, soul, and body, and raise the dead to life again ; but there was a time when He could not raise to life again a soul that had been the death of itself. He always could by the mere word of His mouth give natural life to a dead body, but He never could by the mere word of His mouth give spiritual life to a dead soul. I have just said that nothing is impossible with God ; but even yet there are certain things that God cannot do : God *cannot* lie ; He *cannot* deny Himself ;

and the Scripture, God's Word, *cannot* be broken ; and all this would have taken place if God had saved man by the mere word of His mouth, for God had said, "*The soul that sinneth it shall die.*" Could then God clear the guilty? Could He remit the penalty of death, and say to the convicted sinner, Thou shalt not die? If He did, would He not cease to be the God of truth? would He not rather liken Himself to him who after God had said, Thou shalt surely die, made God a liar, and said, "Thou shall not surely die"? It must be clear to all who believe Him to be the Truth, that by the mere word of His mouth God never could, and never can, raise to spiritual life a dead soul." When man fell, well did every created intelligency, whether in heaven or hell, know this ; and to them it appeared at the time an impossibility that God could

ever be a just God and a Saviour, ever extend mercy to sinners and remain the God of truth. But by the wisdom of Him whose name is Love a plan was devised, and "THE WORD,—THAT WORD BY WHICH THE WORLDS WERE CREATED,—WAS MADE FLESH." A BODY was prepared HIM; and the Son of God came on earth, the Son of Man, to do the greatest work that ever was done by God. Oh, the wisdom that devised it; oh, the love that carried it out! Had the Father spared the Son, or had the Son spared Himself, there could never have been salvation for man: but God the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Love, One with the Father and the Son, and God's only Councillor was Councillor in the counsels of heaven, and the plan by which God might be a just God and a Saviour was devised. Through the Eternal Spirit the Son offered


Himself to God, and "*it pleased the Father.*" The covenant ordered in all things and sure, was entered into by the Eternal Three. And thus said the Lord, the only begotten Son of God, and in the volume of the Book it was written of Him, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." Well did He know to what He came : to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself ; to taste death for every man ; to make a full, sufficient sacrifice, satisfaction and oblation for the sins of the whole world. Well did He know that before He could do this He must receive the wages of sin, and that the wages of sin is death ; and well did He know what THAT DEATH meant. Well did He know the baptism with which He would be baptized, and the bitterness of the cup the Father would put into His hand,—but for the joy set before Him He endured the

cross and despised the shame ; and it was His having accepted that cup that enabled Him to say the Father would show Him greater works than these which He Himself doeth ; and it was in anticipation of His baptism of blood that He uttered the precious, passing knowledge truth, "*The Son quickeneth whom He will.*"

But *He has* uttered them, and they have become Scripture, and the Scripture cannot be broken. It is now not more sure that "the soul that sinneth it shall die," than that Christ can quicken whom He will. No matter how dead a man may be, dead as the daughter of Jairus or as the son of the widow or as Lazarus, of whom his sister said "he stinketh," or as they of whom God speaks as being "twice dead, plucked up by the roots;" as sure as it is that if God is the truth (and He *is* the truth), the soul that

sinneth it shall die,—so sure is it that if Christ is the truth (and He is the truth) He can quicken WHOM HE WILL. What a revelation ! Read it, believe it, meditate upon it, lay it up in your heart, and feed upon it with thanksgiving. He *has* the ability, He *has* the power ; He purchased it to Himself with His own blood. Be you who or what you may, if He wills it, He *can* quicken YOU,—make YOU alive unto God. HE CAN. Oh, it is a great truth ! Grasp it I say again, lay hold of it, and never let it go. HE CAN !

These words, “ *The Son quickeneth whom He will,*” struck me very powerfully when I came to them in the course of my reading on the day of my reverie, to which I have before alluded. Receiving the kingdom of God as a little child, it was a perfect certainty that if Christ could quicken whom



He would, then He could quicken me. At least *I might be saved* ; for I had found *One* who was able to save anybody, and therefore who *could* save me.

And did I think He would not ? or can any man sin a greater sin against God than to think Christ will not save him if he goes to Him ? That He might have the power He made His own soul an offering for sin ; and is not the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, one great history of His willingness ? Why was the Bible written at all,—written at such a cost to God in the blood of His own Son ? That God, who is not willing that any should perish, might give to man a revelation, by believing which he might be saved. Herein is love ; not that we loved God, but that God loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins ; and this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all

acceptation, "That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, even the chief." Is not your name sinner? Perhaps it is even the chief; but, even so, that does not deprive you of the family name: you remain sinner still; but if you go to Christ and ask Him to forgive and save you, and have no faith that He will, you *make God a liar*, for you believe not the record that God hath given us of His Son. (See 1 John v. 10.) You add to all your other sins the sin of unbelief; and if you continue in unbelief you cannot be saved. But I shall have to speak on this again before I have done. Let us now go on with the next passage.

We have just endeavoured to consider Christ's revelation of Himself as Christ the Saviour—God over all blessed for ever,—and we now come to consider Him in another character which, like the former, could only

have been made known by revelation, and can only be received by faith. I beseech you therefore, while we meditate on it, to accept with a child's simplicity what is written in the Bible, and then THE WORD at least will be on your side ; and let your portion be what else it may, it never can be that of an unbeliever. Christ next reveals Himself to the Jews, and through the Jews to us, as our JUDGE ; and tells the special reason why the Father has appointed Him JUDGE. *"For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him."*

As our Lord in the preceding verses had so plainly stated His oneness with the Father, that the Jews sought to kill Him

because He being a man made Himself God, so here again, in language if possible more unmistakably plain and clear, He does the same thing. Nothing can be a greater proof of the absolute blindness and foolishness of the natural man in spiritual things than the intense nonsense that some persons, in other respects wise and prudent, believe and talk and write about the Lord Jesus Christ. There are at this day, and in this generation, a large body of influential and well educated people who, professing to believe the Bible, will yet tell you that the Lord Jesus Christ is not and never professed to be God. At the same time they will tell you He was the best man that ever lived upon earth,—a pattern of every goodness, morality, and virtue,—One who has left us an example that we shall do well to follow ; but still a man, only a man, and

nothing but a man. Verily may we not ask, with St. Paul, "Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" *A man, nothing but a man, and yet the very best man that ever lived upon earth!* Away with such rubbish, such soul destroying rubbish: away with it! Either the Lord Jesus Christ was the greatest impostor, the greatest liar and cheat ever born of woman, and has done more harm on earth than was ever done since the fall of Adam, or He was God. What: a good man, and yet only a man, and claim to do whatever God as God could do, and even greater works than these! What: a good man, and yet only a man, and claim to raise dead bodies, quicken dead souls, be the Saviour and Judge of the world, and receive as His right the honour that is due to God only! Again and again are we told in Scripture that it is GOD who raises

both the naturally and spiritually dead; that it is GOD who shall judge the world, and that GOD will not give His glory to another; yet in the half-dozen verses between the seventeenth and twenty-third of this chapter, as well as in numerous other places in the Scriptures, Jesus tells us that it is He who doeth all these things, *that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father*. How would a little child receive these statements? Would it be with the subtle reasoning of those who wrest them, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction, or would it be with the cry of faith: CHRIST, MY SAVIOUR! CHRIST, MY JUDGE! GOD OVER ALL, BLESSED FOR EVER!

I believe there are numbers of what are called learned and deep thinking people who profess to believe in God, and who

would be troubled in their minds if they thought they were not honouring God,—whose God in reality is no better than an idol of their own creation, and who have done nothing but dishonour God all their lives. And this is because their own reason and their own wisdom will not allow them to make the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ their God, or permit them to honour the Son even as they honour the Father. They believe the revelations of their own intellect rather than the revelations of Scripture, or at the best mix up the two ; and while they acknowledge a god of the universe, a god of nature, a god of creation, and other lords many and gods many, they know nothing of the only living and true God,—the God of the Bible ; and, what is almost worse, while they continue in their present faith they have

no God to go to to instruct them. Let such listen to the words of Him who many of them call *a good man*, and I suppose such, at least, will believe that He would not speak falsely. . "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father but by ME." And again: "No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father but the Son, and *he to whom the Son will reveal Him.*" If this be true, no matter what honour men may profess to be paying to God, if they are not honouring the Son as they honour the Father, they are not honouring the Father at all; if they are not going to the Father through the Son, they are not going to the Father at all; if they do not know the Father by the teaching of the Son, they do not know the Father at all. The man who thinks that

there is any God who will, or even CAN, answer prayer for spiritual blessing that is not offered up in the name of the Son of God, Jesus Christ; or the man who thinks he can even get access to God to present his prayer, except by and through that same Son, is under "a strong delusion to believe a lie;" and if he dies in the same faith, will die with a lie in his right hand. This is the teaching of the Bible; this is what St. John means when he saith, "*Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ HATH NOT GOD; he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ he hath both THE FATHER AND THE SON.*" If a man elects to place his hope of salvation on the doctrines of research and science; on the teaching of his own or any other human wisdom, and refuses to receive the Bible in the spirit of a little child,—he must stand or fall by

his own election ; but let such a man remember that *if the Bible is true he is lost*. That Book says, "Cease from thine own wisdom," "Lean not to thine own understanding ;" and God gave it to teach man what he must do to be saved, because his own wisdom and his own understanding could never teach him. And while that Book says, "He that hath the Son hath life ; he that believeth in Him shall not perish,"—it also saith, "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." The very next verse indeed that we have to consider teaches this doctrine exactly : "Verily, verily," says the Lord Jesus, "I say unto you, He that heareth my word and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." For if it is true that he

who heareth Christ's words, and believeth on HIM that sent Him, hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation, the converse is also true,—that he that heareth not Christ's words, and believeth not on Him that sent Him, hath not everlasting life and shall come into condemnation. You cannot reject the Son without rejecting the Father, and there is no other God than the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. A God who did not so love the world as to give his only begotten son to be a propitiation for man's sins, is a God that has no more existence than "Ashtoreth, the abomination of the Zidonians," or "Milcom, the abomination of the children of Ammon."

The remaining verses of the passage, from the twenty-fifth to the end of the thirtieth, seem a repetition of the doctrines already considered, or rather if I may so speak, a

practical exposition of them ; and acting on what appears to me the example of the Lord, I will try a short practical exposition also. May God the Holy Ghost give to me, for Christ's sake, wisdom to expound, and to you faith to receive all that is true teaching.

Our Lord was surrounded by a vast multitude, the greater part of whom were what He meant by DEAD : dead spiritually,—dead in trespasses and sins. To this multitude, in the first place, His words, which are both a prophecy and a promise, were addressed : “ Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God : and they that hear shall live.” *On that day* was this Scripture fulfilled in their ears ; *on this day* it is fulfilled in yours. The hour was *then coming* to you, and *then was* to them. The hour *now is* to you, and is

coming to the generations who are what you were eighteen hundred years ago. "The hour *now is*," said the Saviour to that multitude,—the hour when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live; the hour *now is*, says the Saviour to you; and the hour *now is*, He has said to every one of that countless number to whom the Gospel has been preached from that day, their day of salvation,—to this day, your day of salvation. That hour has passed to many, and is coming to others; once it belonged to somebody else, now it belongs to you. Oh, who can calculate its value? Accept its opportunities, and you shall live: let them pass, and there will never be life in you: but accept them, or reject them, you must move on towards eternity; for there are those waiting to whom the hour is only "*coming*," who require you to make room

for them, that it may become to them what it is to-day to you,—“NOW IS.” But NOW is YOUR accepted time ; and if YOU are yet a dead sinnner, I would speak to YOU. Though you are the deadeest sinner on the whole earth, a Voice is *now* sounding in your outward ears that has power to give YOU life ; if you will only listen to it, and receive it into your heart by faith, YOU shall live. I make you this promise on the word of Him who cannot lie. I know that to you, if you have not been quickened by the Son of God, the things of this present world appear realities, and His words about His Father, and the glory of the world to come, dreamy and unsubstantial ; but this is because the god which you believe,—call him your own heart, or by what name you please,—deceives you ; and if you have no life but the life that now is, you are what

God means by DEAD; and if you come to the end of what you call life, without having believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, and gone to Him for that eternal life which He alone can give, you will learn by a teaching from which both He and His people would most willingly save you, what is meant by being born dead,—being dead while you live, and having death for your portion for ever. Christ is “the Resurrection and the Life,” and He came into a dead world to bring life,—life worthy of the name,—real, spiritual, everlasting life; but every man’s life or death depends altogether upon this,—whether he will, or whether he will not, hear Christ’s words. What I mean by HEAR is,—listen to them, receive them, put trust in them, obey them, and act upon them. There is no man in the world He cannot quicken; for as the Father raiseth up the dead and

quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will. There is no man in the world He cannot quicken, neither is there any man in the world He will not quicken if the man will but believe His words, and hearken only unto Him. But he who would be quickened must believe no spirit that contradicts Christ. Every thing depends on this. It is useless for a man to go to Him, and then allow his faith to be determined by what he finds in His own heart. Man's heart is a lying and blind guide, full of false wisdom, false feeling, false reason ; and it is the express purpose of the Father that our faith should not stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God. Christ is the Wisdom of God, and the Power of God, unto truth and life ; and out of Him there is neither truth nor life. Yet such is the nature of man, that, no matter how in natu-

ral character one may differ from another, in this they are all alike,—that he who has not been quickened, invariably makes Christ a liar and his own heart the truth. He may not know that he does it; for the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; and it is almost the last thing it would wish a man to know. But by nature he does it, for all that; and I think a little self-examination would compel any honest man to confess it. The guide and teacher a man follows, is the guide and teacher he believes; and do men generally follow Christ or their own hearts? Believe and follow whom they may, however, there is no truth in the world or in the heart, but “*the truth as it is in Jesus*;” and God says, “He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool.” (Prov. xxviii. 26.) Again: God says, “The whole world lieth in the wicked one;” that every

one, without exception, who has not been quickened by Christ, lieth dead in him ; and "the wicked one" is a liar, and the father of it. "When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own ;" and his object is to get man to believe his lies all through his life in this world, to the destruction of his soul and body in the world which is to come. The object of the natural spirit in a man is his destruction unto death eternal ; the object of Christ is his salvation unto life eternal.

And this salvation is secured beyond the possibility of doubt to all who will HEAR Christ's words : "*Hear, and your soul shall live.*" "HEAR," is the commandment of the Gospel ; "YOUR SOUL SHALL LIVE," the promise : and "God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by

an oath ; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." "VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO YOU, THEY THAT HEAR SHALL LIVE." God's word ! God's oath ! "Two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie !" Only receive His words ; only believe His oath. Believe that, One with the Father, He has been a fellow-worker with Him from eternity ; that whatsoever things He doeth, the same doeth the Son likewise ; that He can not only raise dead bodies, but as the Father has life in Himself so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself ; and, purchased with His own blood, He has power to quicken dead souls. Only believe thus in Him, and go to Him to quicken your dead soul, and you may take to yourself personally

the comfort of that Scripture,—“He that heareth my Word, and believeth in Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life ; and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.”

But while we dwell with delight and gratitude on the revelation, “Christ the Saviour,” let us never forget the other revelation, “Christ the Judge.” “As the Father has life in Himself, so has He given to the Son to have life in Himself ; and hath given Him authority *to execute judgment also*, because He is the Son of man.” Christ is not now on the judgment seat, but on the mercy seat, “able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by Him.” But “God has appointed a day in the which He will judge the world *in righteousness* by that MAN whom He hath ordained,” and “we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.”

We may neglect or drive the thought from us now, but there is a day coming when it will be forced upon us, without place for repentance, or room for escape. "God has given Me authority," saith the Lord, "not only to be the Saviour, but the Judge of men." "*Marvel not at this.*" Do not stand marvelling at what I say, but believe it. Do not stand reasoning and arguing until the day of judgment comes upon you unawares, and like the despisers of old ye "wonder and perish." (Acts xiii. 41.) "*Marvel not at this : for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves SHALL hear His voice, and SHALL come forth ; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*" These are the words of Christ : and thus it will be. And when in that hour that voice sounds, there will be neither in-

attention nor neglect ; every ear will listen to it ; every creature will yield obedience to it ; and all the dead will come forth. The hour *now is*, when to hear or to refuse to hear is optional : Christ's voice is at this moment calling, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead." But the choice whether we will arise or not is *now* with ourselves ; but as surely as this hour has come, which in the days of our childhood looked nearly as far off as the day of judgment, so surely is the hour coming when we **SHALL** hear the call, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead !" and when the choice whether we shall arise or not, will not be left to ourselves. A dead sinner can close his ears to the voice of Christ the Saviour ; but a dead sinner can **NOT** close his ears to the voice of Christ the Judge.

But woe, woe to him who hears the voice

of Christ for the first time as "CHRIST THE JUDGE." Good would it have been for that man if he had never been born. Think not the day of judgment will be a day of mercy, for there will be no mercy then ; it will be a day of the strictest justice, when every man will receive exactly what in the judgment of a Holy and Just God, are his true and just deservings. This is the day of mercy, and it is now if ever that mercy must be obtained, for God's mercy to sinners is His gift of CHRIST THE SAVIOUR. IN HIM He has provided for all our need. He who in this world hears the voice of the Son of God, and believeth in Him, is "COMPLETE IN HIM, wanting nothing for the day of judgment." (Colos. ii. 10.) From that moment Christ's death for sin is put down to him as if he had died it, and Christ's life of obedience as if he had lived it ;

and thus in Christ having received a "gift of righteousness,"—or as another Scripture saith, being "made the righteousness of God in Him,"—the sinner is enabled (as Abraham was whose faith was imputed to him for righteousness) to stand before the Judge as one who by imputation has "*done good*," and will arise to "*the resurrection of life*;" but he who lives and dies without hearing and believing in the Son of God, should he have committed but one sin in his whole life, being utterly unable by any after-act of his own to wash that sin away, must stand before the Judge with that one sin on Him. Could the Just Judge say he was without sin? Must he not be brought in guilty of having "*done evil*"? and must not his resurrection be "*the resurrection of damnation*"?

Oh, how imploringly will those who neg-

lect the Saviour now, call upon the Judge then. But it will be too late : for what can a just Judge do ? The criminal may be as dear to him as his own life, and his heart may break while he passes sentence, but if the statute book is against the criminal, the just Judge cannot save him. The Father has given the Son authority to execute judgment, but like any other judge, He is not the law, but its executor. How plainly He has Himself explained this : “ If any man hear my words, and believeth not, *I judge him not* : for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not my words, hath One that judgeth him : *the Word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.*” (John xii. 47, 48.) And again in the last verse of the passage on which we are meditating, “ *I*

can of mine own self do nothing : as I hear, I judge : and my judgment is just ; because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me." That will is that His law should be magnified and made honourable, and that God should be glorified both "*in them that are saved, and in them that perish :*" and it is not His will to "*clear the guilty*" or *falsify His own Word*. If that Word is against you, the Judge can do nothing for you : though He should love you as He loved the young man who would not forsake all for Him ; or weep over you as He wept over Jerusalem, saying the same words, yet could He not save you. Now, if you will believe on Him, His word is on your side, and, no matter how great your need, He can do *everything* for you. All power is given into His hands as Christ the Saviour. He hath power to forgive

sins ; to quicken or make alive whom He will, and after He has made alive to keep alive ; to save to the uttermost them that come to God by Him, and He casteth out none : but as Christ the Judge He can do nothing but judge you by the Word of God, and He plainly tells you so. "*I can of mine own self do nothing ; as I hear I judge : and my judgment is just.*" At that day, if I may so speak, it is not so much the Judge that we want on our side, as the Bible. The heart of the Judge will be always love, and He never will have any pleasure in the death of him that dieth. He hateth putting away, and judgment is His strange work ; but the Scripture cannot be broken, and heaven and earth shall pass away, but Christ's words shall not pass until all be fulfilled. Now it is written, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and

all the people that forget God." It is written, "He that believeth not shall be damned." It is written that at the judgment, "Whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire;" therefore if not only all the grossly wicked, but all the people who habitually forget God, are not turned into hell,—if unbelievers are not damned, and if whosoever is not found written in the Book of Life is not cast into the lake of fire,—is Christ's Word fulfilled? is not the Scripture broken? Need I say more to show you that if the Bible is against you at the day of judgment, your destruction is as certain as the Word of God can make it.

Let us then to-day, while it is called to-day, hear the voice of Christ the Saviour; and then in that instant both God and His Word will be on our side; and if God be

for us who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but freely gave Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? You are one of the elect if you will listen to the voice of Jesus. It is God that justifieth. Who is He that condemneth? It is Christ that died: yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Let the world, the flesh, and the devil say and do what they may, I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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HAVING reason to believe, from the testimony of many, that several of the papers in the little book called "Earnest Words," have been honoured by God, and made useful to souls, I have determined to prepare a new edition. In it I have retained the articles which I think the Lord has been pleased to bless; altering and adding to them, however, so as in my judgment to improve their likelihood of general usefulness: and in the place of some of the old papers, I have substituted new. I have also to the end of every chapter, in this edition, added a text and a little prayer, and have added a seventh to my "Six Short Rules for Christians."

My object in preparing this edition has been to produce a comprehensive, plain-spoken, yet cheap book, suited for circulation amongst all classes: a book having that in it which, under God's blessing, might awaken the careless, instruct the anxious, and even feed the Christian; and knowing that whatever the new matter may do, the old has already been made effectual for all these things, I am anxious that this edition should be very extensively circulated. I have written no book that I would rather see in the hands of the multitude, because I have written no book which I believe more likely to be generally useful.

I have communicated my wishes on this subject to my publishers, Messrs. WILLIAM HUNT AND COMPANY, to whom this edition of "Earnest Words" belongs; and to whom applications may be made for copies on special terms, for gratuitous distribution.

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